



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

DOCUMENTS

THE APPOINTMENT OF FATHER JOHN CARROLL AS PREFECT- APOSTOLIC OF THE CHURCH IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

(1783-1785)

When the Revolutionary War broke out between the Thirteen Colonies and England in 1775, ecclesiastical intercourse between London and the Catholic clergy in the future republic came to an end. There is no record in Bishop Challoner's correspondence of any reference to the Church in America at this time.¹ From 1743, down to the beginning of the Revolution, Bishop Petre of the London District (1734-1758), and his coadjutor and successor, Bishop Challoner (1741-1781), used every available argument with the ecclesiastical authorities at Rome to rid themselves of the burden of ruling the Church "on the mainland and in the islands of North America," by creating a separate Vicariate-Apostolic in English America.² Bishop Challoner did not succeed in freeing himself of the unwelcome task of caring for the Catholics in the English colonies. The Holy See was not certain that the Catholics there could support their own Chief Shepherd, and the problem of erecting the colonial Church into a separate jurisdiction was further complicated by two factors: the evident antagonism on the part of the colonial Catholics to the appointment of a bishop over them (1765),³ and the suppression of the Jesuits in America (1773).⁴ It was not until a decade later, when Challoner's successor, Bishop James Talbot, refused to exercise jurisdiction in the matter of giving faculties to two American priests then in England (1783), that the Holy See decided to take action. So far as the English Catholic Church was concerned, there was no evidence of any interest on the part of the London Vicar-Apostolic to provide for the Catholic rebels of the new Republic of the United States. Bishop James Talbot appears but once

¹ Cf. *Bishop Challoner's American Jurisdiction* (1758-1781), in BURTON, *Life and Times of Bishop Challoner*, Vol. ii, pp. 123-148. London, 1909.

² The history of the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the English Colonies has not yet been told in a consecutive manner. There are some historical data in HUGHES, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America*, Text, Vol. ii, pp. 81-83, 85-87, 127, 133, 583. From 1634 (the foundation year of Maryland), down to 1696, the year of the special decree *Alias a particulari*, of Innocent XII, by which an attempt was made to bring harmony between the Jesuits and the Seculars, there is no evidence for the exercise of canonical rights over the Colonies by the ecclesiastical superiors of England. In 1715, it was admitted by the Maryland clergy that they were uncertain whether they were under London or Quebec. With but few exceptions, and those doubtful in their nature, the real assumption of jurisdiction by the London Vicar-Apostolic is synchronous with Challoner's attempt, in 1743, to rid the Church in England of the bothersome colonies. Cf. *The London Vicariate-Apostolic and the West Indies*, article by HUGHES, in the *Dublin Review*, Vol. cxxxiv, pp. 66-93.

³ Campbell (USCHS *Hist. Records and Studies*, Vol. i, pp. 251-276) treats this aspect of the question in his article: *The Beginnings of the American Hierarchy*; cf. BURTON, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, pp. 136-139. For the singular share given to the question of Confirmation in the correspondence between London and Rome at this time, cf. HUGHES *The Sacrament of Confirmation in the Old Colonies*, article in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, Vol. xxv, pp. 23-40.

⁴ SHEA, *Hist. of the Cath. Church in the United States*, vol. ii, p. 77 (facsimile of Challoner's order for the Suppression in America); for a facsimile of the Act of Submission, see HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Documents, Vol. ii, p. 607.

in the correspondence of these two critical years in the life of the American Church (1783-1785), and then merely as the recipient of a letter from the Cardinal-Prefect of Propaganda, Antonelli, dated Rome, June 19, 1784, advising him that the Church in the United States was free and independent of English rule.⁵

The clergy and the faithful in the Colonies, however, were not acephalous during the war. When the suppression of the Society of Jesus was announced by Bishop Challoner in October, 1773, the acting Superior, Father John Lewis, Vicar-General of the London Vicar-Apostolic, continued to be recognized by the clergy—without exception, all ex-Jesuits—as their legitimate head. After Yorktown (1781), there could have been no question of appealing to Bishop James Talbot, brother of the Earl of Shrewsbury, for guidance; and once the final Treaty of Peace with Great Britain was signed on September 25, 1783, the line of cleavage was complete.

During this time, a General Chapter of the American clergy was called. Meetings were held at Whitemarsh in 1783-1784—from June 27, 1783, to October 11, 1784. A *Form of Government* in nineteen sections; *Rules for the Particular Government of the Clergy*, in six sections; and *Regulations respecting the Management of Plantations*, in eight sections, were passed with the approval of those present.⁶ The two principal questions before this Constitutional Assembly of the American clergy were: *the maintenance of ecclesiastical life and discipline*; and, *the preservation of ecclesiastical property*, which by this time had become considerable.

It is the first of these problems which interests us here.

Father Thomas Hughes, S.J., has written four large volumes, entitled *The History of the Society of Jesus in North America, Colonial and Federal*, to explain the second.⁷

The Constitution adopted at the last meeting of this General Chapter (October 11, 1784), remained in force until 1805, when the Society of Jesus was partially restored in the United States. (The universal restoration of the Society in 1814, rendered further adherence to the *Rules* and *Regulations* to a great extent unnecessary). In the Proceedings of the Chapter, October 11, 1784, the following resolution was adopted:

That the Superior in spirituals from the receipt of his faculties be allowed the salary of 100-0-0 sterling per annum, together with a servant, and a chaise and horse; that his salary continue until the next ensuing meeting of the Chapter, and then be subject to their further determinations.⁸

Before this Second General Chapter met (again at Whitemarsh) in 1786,

⁵ *Propaganda Documents* (cited as PD), pp. 35-36. These *Documents* (on the appointment of the first Bishop of Baltimore), appeared in the original French, Italian, and Latin, in the *American Historical Review*, for July, 1910, pp. 801-829. They were copied at Rome by Professor Carl Russell Fish, while he was engaged on his *Guide to the Materials for American History in Roman and other Italian Archives* (Washington, 1911), and were translated into English and published by the late American Church historian, Rev. Edward I. Devitt, S.J., in the *Records* of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, Vol. xxi, pp. 185-236.

⁶ HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Documents, Vol. ii, pp. 617-637.

⁷ New York (Longmans), 1908.

⁸ HUGHES, *op. cit.*, p. 631.

Father John Carroll had accepted the Prefectship-Apostolic of the Church in the United States. His nomination and acceptance form one of the most interesting pages in American Catholic history. The story has never been fully told, and it is impossible to tell it in a strictly chronological fashion, owing to several complicating factors which touch the main issue at certain points. Some of these factors were: Carroll's attitude toward the acceptance of a post of such importance "from a foreign State," to be held only "at the discretion of a foreign tribunal or congregation [Propaganda Fide]"; the expectation of the American clergy in the speedy restoration of the Society of Jesus; the intrigue at Paris—grouped around the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Doria Pamphili, the American Minister, Benjamin Franklin, the French Prime Minister, Count de Vergennes, the notorious Talleyrand, then Bishop of Autun, and Cardinal Antonelli, Prefect of Propaganda Fide; and the position assumed by the American clergy at Whitemarsh toward the appointment of a bishop for the United States.

Father John Lewis, the last of the Jesuit Superiors of the Mission before the Suppression, continued to exercise a quasi-jurisdiction over the clergy from 1773, down to the first General Chapter in 1783. He can scarcely be said to have had juridic or canonical powers over his brother-priests. There was a sort of gentlemen's agreement that he should be their leader, but his title of Superior was rather an honorary one. The decade has not incorrectly been called by Hughes a period of inaction—"the ex-Jesuits merely stayed at their posts, discharging in a spiritless way their pastoral duties."⁹ The missions under their care were extensive, as can be seen from the maps published as appendixes to Hughes' *History*. Two Propaganda documents, published in the CATHOLIC HISTORICAL REVIEW, give us an accurate account of the state of Catholicism during this period of inaction which corresponds with the Revolutionary War (1773-1783).¹⁰ The first is a *Relation* drawn up by Father John Mattingly, dated September 6, 1773, in which he tells us that the principal residence of the Society was Port Tobacco, in Charles County. The next in order of dignity was the residence at New Town, in St. Mary's County, which formed a sort of "Collegium," as in the early days of the Jesuit Mission in England. From New Town, the Fathers attended the various congregations within a radius of twenty miles, celebrating Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy-days of Obligation. Mattingly's *Relation* gives us a very fair picture of how thoroughly the missions were attended. The want of a bishop to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation was badly felt, but the antipathy of the non-conformist element in Maryland to the presence of an Anglican prelate made the appointment of a Catholic bishop a serious matter. In another hand, at the end of this document we are told that the Catholics in Maryland and Pennsylvania numbered at the time about twenty thousand. In Pennsylvania there was practically complete freedom of worship. It was somewhat restrained

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 608.

¹⁰ Vol. ii, pp. 317-320. A list of the Jesuit Superiors from 1634 to 1773, will be found in FOLEY, *Records, etc. (Collectanea, part I)*, pp. 73-74. A biographical list of all the Jesuits who labored in the American Mission is in HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Text, Vol. ii, pp. 676-704 (Appendix F).

in Maryland.¹¹ The second of these documents, from the same volume of the Propaganda Archives, is apparently of a later date than Father Mattingly's *Relation*. It purports to give a complete *Catalogue of the Jesuit Missions in the United States*. The number of priests was twenty-six at the time. There were twenty-five Scholastics, ten Novices, twenty-five Lay Brothers, and nine Lay Novices—making a total of ninety-five members in the Society. The various missions are given with the approximate distances between the residences of the priests.

Father John Lewis made no attempt to create a central organization for the Church in these scattered missions; and in a letter, dated Maryland, February 20, 1782, from Father John Carroll to his friend, Father Charles Plowden, who was to preach at his consecration at Lulworth Castle, eight years later, we learn that all were not satisfied with the rather loose ecclesiastical system which prevailed at this time:

The clergymen here continue to live in the old form. It is the effect of habit, and if they could promise themselves immortality, it would be well enough. But I regret that indolence prevents any form of administration being adopted, which might tend to secure to posterity a succession of Catholic clergymen, and secure to them a comfortable subsistence. I said, that the former system of administration (that is, everything being in the power of a Superior) continued. But all those checks upon him, so wisely provided by former constitutions, are at an end. It is happy that the present Superior [Father John Lewis] is a person free from every selfish view and ambition. But his successor may not [be] . . . Ignorance, indolence, delusion (you remember certain prophecies of re-establishment), and above all the irresolution of Mr. Lewis, puts a stop to every proceeding in this matter.¹²

Father Carroll at this time had no official position in the American Church. We find him, however, during this same year, 1782, drawing up a *Plan of Organization* for the clergy.¹³ It can be presumed that copies of this were distributed among his fellow priests, for the Chapter of 1783-1784, followed out the main lines of his proposals. The *Plan* is divided into seven paragraphs. Tentative suggestions are given for the maintenance and careful administration of the estates, but nowhere does Carroll imply the necessity of centering the spiritual guidance of the Church under one head. He was preoccupied, as most of his fellow-priests of that day were, with the preservation of the Society's property. "The obligations of justice to the benefactors, who took up or left these estates for pious uses; the sort of consecration which estates from such a destination acquire; the duty of charity to the present and future generations"—these are the motives, and worthy ones, too, for this preoccupation. Rumors were abroad at the time that those who had succeeded in destroying the Society in Europe had designs also upon the temporal possessions of the Jesuits; and Carroll speaks rather emphatically on the question of interference in this regard. Their brethren in England, he said,

¹¹ "I cattolici delle due provincie di Marilandia e Pensilvania saranno circa ventimila. L'esercizio della religione nella prima è libero; nella seconda è totalmente libero."

¹² HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Documents, Vol. ii, p. 609.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 609-614.

had "rightly distinguished between the spiritual power derived from the bishop, and which must be left in the hands to which he has intrusted it; and the common rights of the missionaries to their temporal possessions, to which as the bishop, or Pope himself, have no just claim, so neither can they invest any person or persons with the administration of them."

Carroll's views on foreign interference in temporal matters must be kept in mind when we come to examine his attitude toward the Congregation of Propaganda Fide the following year. In a letter to Father Charles Plowden, dated September 26, 1783, there are several statements which have a bearing on this aspect of the problem under consideration in these pages. He writes for instance, during the time the Chapter was in session:

Our gentlemen continue, as when last I wrote. We are endeavoring to establish some regulations tending to perpetuate a succession of labourers in this vineyard, to preserve their morals, to prevent idleness, and to secure an equitable and frugal administration of our temporals. . . . Your information of the intention of Propaganda gives me concern no farther than to hear that men, whose institution was for the service of Religion, should bend their thoughts so much more to the grasping of power, and the commanding of wealth. For they may be assured that they will never get possession of a sixpence of our property here; and, if any of our friends could be weak enough to deliver any real estate into their hands, or attempt to subject it to their authority, our civil government would be called upon to wrest it again out of their dominion. A foreign temporal jurisdiction will never be tolerated here; and even the spiritual supremacy of the Pope is the only reason, why in some of the United States the full participation of all civil rights is not granted to the Roman Catholics. They may therefore send their agents when they please; they will certainly return empty-handed.¹⁴

The following April, 1784, in a letter to the same correspondent, Father Carroll uses language not dissimilar in spirit; this time, however, it is the spiritual jurisdiction of the Congregation which is in question:

But this you may be assured of; that no authority derived from the Propaganda will ever be admitted here; that the Catholic Clergy and Laity here know that the only connexion they ought to have with Rome is to acknowledge the Pope as Spiritual head of the Church, that no Congregations existing in his States shall be allowed to exercise any share of his Spiritual authority here; that no Bishop Vicar-Apostolical shall be admitted, and, if we are to have a Bishop, he shall not be in partibus (a refined political Roman Contrivance), but an ordinary national Bishop, in whose appointment Rome shall have no share; so that we are very easy about their machinations. Our Brethren have, in a meeting held last October, settled or nearly settled a plan of internal government, which will meet with your approbation, being founded on Christian and rational principles, etc.¹⁵

It is difficult to say what was the precise cause of the first general Chapter of the clergy, but if one may judge from the material at hand, it was rather the fear of losing hold on the property which had been amassed since 1634,

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 615-616.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 619-620.

than the realization of their singular canonical situation. The Delegates of the three Districts met at Whitemarsh on November 6, 1783. These were Father John Lewis for the *Northern District* (Pennsylvania and the Eastern Shore of Maryland), Fathers John Carroll and Bernard Diderick for the *Middle District* (the Western Shore of Maryland, except St. Mary's and Charles Counties), and Fathers Ignatius Matthews and James Walton for the *Southern District* (St. Mary's and Charles Counties, with Virginia). A committee was appointed, consisting of these five Delegates, for the purpose of preparing a Petition to the Holy See, asking that Father John Lewis be formally constituted Superior of the Church in the New Republic, with certain episcopal privileges—administering the Sacrament of Confirmation, blessing chalices, and delegating priests for the missions. This Petition gives us a clear idea of the attitude of the clergy toward the problem of a hierarchy of jurisdiction in the American Church. It runs as follows:

Most Holy Father:

We, John Lewis, Bernard Diderick, Ignatius Matthews, James Walton, and John Carroll, missionary priests, residing in the Thirteen United States of North America, assembled together from the neighboring stations to take counsel for the good of the missions, our fellow-priests residing in the more remote parts of this mission agreeing herein and approving by letter, in our name and in the common name of our brethren, with all respect represent to your Holiness, that we, placed under the recent supreme dominion of the United America, can no longer have recourse, as formerly, for necessary spiritual jurisdiction to the Bishops and Vicars-Apostolic residing in different and foreign States (for this has very frequently been intimated to us in very positive terms by the rulers of this Republic), nor recognize any one of them as our ecclesiastical Superior, without open offense of this supreme civil magistracy and political government. Wherefore we, placed in this difficult position have recourse to your Holiness, humbly beseeching you to vouchsafe to confirm anew the ecclesiastical Superior whom we now have, namely, John Lewis, a priest already approved and confirmed by the Vicar-Apostolic of London, to whom this whole mission was subject before the change of political government, and to delegate to him the power of granting the necessary faculties to priests coming into these missions, as it shall seem expedient; that said Superior may delegate this power to at least one or more of the most suitable missionaries as the necessity and distance of time and place may require.

Moreover, as there is no bishop in these regions, who can bless the holy oils, of which we were deprived for several years during the confusion of the war, no one to bless the chalices and altar stones needed, no one to administer the sacrament of confirmation, we humbly beseech your Holiness to empower the said John Lewis, priest, Superior, to perform these things in the present necessity, and until otherwise provided for this mission by your Holiness, that our faithful, living in many dangers, may be no longer deprived of the Sacrament of Confirmation nor die without Extreme Unction according to the rite of the Church.

Moreover, we also pray your Holiness to bestow on this mission the indulgences of the Jubilee, and to extend to the missionaries the ample faculties which may seem seasonable in these vast and remote regions racked by a long bitter war, where on account of the constant military movements, neither the

Jubilee on the exaltation of your Holiness to the See of Peter, nor the Jubilee of the year 1775, could be promulgated, much less celebrated or enjoyed.

This, Most Holy Father, is what the aforesaid petitioners, missionary priests in these regions of United North America, humbly solicit from your Holiness' supreme wisdom and providence for the good of the Catholic Religion.¹⁶

Shea says that this Petition was forwarded through Cardinal Borromeo. Evidently it was presented to Pius VI, as it is still among the Propaganda Archives (America Centrale).¹⁷ When its contents became known to the rest of the American clergy, it was feared by some that it was not sufficiently respectful in tone, and accordingly another Committee, of which John Carroll was a member, was appointed to draft a second Petition. This second request for a Superior contained the modification that they be permitted to elect their own Superior; it declared also that the United States Government would not permit the presence of a Bishop in the country. Father Carroll was instructed to send this second Petition to the Holy Father through a friend at Rome. Accompanying the Petition was a long letter from Carroll instructing his friend on the mind of the American clergy toward the establishment of a hierarchy in the United States. The Revolution, he says, had rendered any exercise of spiritual jurisdiction on the part of the London Vicar-Apostolic impossible and even injurious to the welfare of the Church. It was their duty to preserve and improve the "free toleration" allowed to all Christians in the United States, "by demeaning ourselves on all occasions as subjects zealously attached to our Government and by avoiding to give any jealousies on account of any dependence on foreign jurisdiction more than that which is essential to our religion—an acknowledgment of the Pope's spiritual supremacy over the whole Christian world."¹⁸ Father Carroll's views on the question of an American hierarchy were always guided by this distinction. He could see no other way of meeting fairly and honestly the American attitude toward "foreign jurisdiction," except by the appointment of a Bishop Ordinary, with his See in the United States. He instructs his correspondent, therefore, that the Superior asked for in the Petition, should have episcopal powers. This second Petition arrived too late in Rome to have any appreciable effect upon the action of the Holy See in organizing the American Church. The factor which actually hastened the final arrangement, namely, Carroll's nomination to the Prefectship-Apostolic, was an intrigue at Paris for what Shea not unjustly calls the enslavement of the Catholics in this country.¹⁹

At the time when the clergy of the new Republic were holding their meetings at Whitmarsh for the purpose of reorganizing Church government under one of themselves as Superior, who would be subject directly to the Holy See, an interesting and significant series of negotiations were being carried on in Europe, and in particular at Paris, the object of which was to place the nascent American Church under French control. France had proven herself a noble

¹⁶ SHEA, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, pp. 209-211.

¹⁷ *Propaganda Archives, America Centrale*, Vol. 2, No. 8.

¹⁸ SHEA, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 211.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 213, note.

ally during the Revolution. In December, 1776, an American mission at Paris, presided over by Benjamin Franklin, had formally asked the assistance of the French government in the great struggle for independence. That the policy of France was to take advantage of England's conflict with the American colonies was understood by all at that time. France was still smarting under the defeat she sustained in the Seven Years' War and she was recognized as the chief sufferer among the continental nations which had been humiliated by England. America's independence would be a great check upon the arrogance of the British navy. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs in France at that time, the Count de Vergennes, was not only in favor of immediate intervention in favor of the rebelling colonists, but was also a warm personal friend of Franklin.²⁰ Burgoyne's surrender, or, as it was called, to spare the English General's feelings, the "convention between Lieutenant-General Burgoyne and Major-General Gates," on October 17, 1777, marked the turning point in the war. From that date down to the victory at Yorktown the Revolution became an international affair. The news reached Paris in December, 1777, and its immediate effect was to hasten the Alliance with France. This was signed on January 17, 1778. Soldiers, money, warships, and supplies were to be furnished to the struggling colonists. Ultimate victory for the Americans was now a certainty. Franklin, in his house at Passy, a suburb of Paris, gathered around him the best men of the French capital, and it was through his shrewdness and statesmanship that the Alliance was kept in vigorous activity until the end of the war. It must be remembered that France was a great Catholic country at this time.²¹ The King, Louis XVI, mediocre as he was in statesmanship, was a most Christian King in more than name, and there is no doubt that every aspect of the future of the new nation then coming into existence was discussed between him and his ministers. The French Alliance was denounced by the loyalists in America as "a horror and an infamy worse than the Declaration of Independence. That Protestant colonists should ally themselves with the great Roman Catholic monarchy, the ancient enemy of the Anglo-Saxon race, and ally themselves for the purpose of making war upon their own faithful and loving mother, England, was a depth of degradation to which, they declared, they had thought it impossible for Americans to descend. They saw in it nothing but ruin, and the Romanizing of America under despotic government. For the rest of the war, and even for some time afterwards, loyalist newspapers and writers never wearied of describing the details of this ruin which they saw so clearly appearing. They were sure that parts of America had been ceded to France by secret clauses in the treaty or would be demanded at the end of the war, and at times they named the particular states. French vessels were on their way to America laden with tons of holy water, casks of consecrated oil, chests of beads, crucifixes, consecrated wafers, mass books, and bales of indulgences, besides the wheels, hooks and pincers of the Inquisition." ²²

²⁰ FISHER, *The Struggle for American Independence*, Vol. ii, pp. 113-115. Phila., 1908.

²¹ Cf. *The French Clergy's Gift to America*, in the *Catholic Mind*, Vol. xviii, No. 8 (April, 1920).

²² FISHER, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 120; cf. VAN TYNE, *Loyalists in America*, pp. 132-136, for an excellent summary of the loyalist point of view.

This lingering spirit of anti-Catholic bias was only too familiar to the Catholics resident in the English colonies. From the foundation of Jamestown in 1607, that spirit was ever vigilant. The colonial charters were incomplete without their laws for the "regulation of Popery." The Catholics of Maryland and Pennsylvania, where the great majority of them lived, were in reality during the Revolution breathing the air of freedom for the first time since 1689.²³ All the iniquitous regulations to hinder Catholic freedom of conscience which stand so accusingly upon the Statute Books of England were used in the colonies by colonial agents to stifle Catholic life. The series of colonial laws—Anti-Jesuit, Anti-Papist and otherwise—were more than mere echoes of British bigotry; they were living weapons for murdering the souls of those whose fathers had fled to America for conscience' sake.

The general impression the reader takes from the documents presented to him in such volumes as those of Father Hughes, is that the Catholics of the colonies, while under British rule, had endeavored to avoid, as far as possible, all open conflict with the bigoted anti-Catholic law of those days. There was more than the mere opinion that a bishop was not necessary in 1765, which induced the 256 Catholic laymen of Maryland to send their letter of protest to Father Denny, the English Jesuit Provincial, for the war against France, the French and Indian War of the Colonies (1755-1763), had stirred up violent antagonism to all things Catholic. The Catholics of Maryland were openly accused of sympathizing with the French, on account of their faith, and they had been so bitterly oppressed from 1689 onwards that more than one project of migration was discussed at this time.²⁴ The West Indies seemed a likely refuge in 1727; but later on, during the violent anti-Catholic agitation in Maryland (1750-1760), Charles Carroll and other Catholics of means and prominence were contemplating a migration to French Louisiana. Charles Carroll, while on a visit to his son, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, then a student in France (1756), presented a petition to the French government asking for a grant of land on the Arkansas River.²⁵ The plan did not succeed; but the two projects—one toward the West Indies, the other toward French Louisiana—show that these English subjects thought any country and government preferable to the intolerance of English rule. In spite of the fact that they were "almost reduced to the level with our negroes, not having the privilege of voting for persons to represent us in the Assembly," as the Catholic petition to Governor Sharpe of Maryland read in 1757,²⁶ the Catholics of Maryland and elsewhere were among the first to rally to the cause of the Revolution.²⁷ That their sympathies were with France as against England no one can doubt. All the priests in the Maryland-Pennsylvania Mission had been educated in France, or Belgium, in Colleges which had been set up as a protest to the

²³ HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Text, Vol. ii, pp. 154-205.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 490 *seq.*

²⁵ A third plan is mentioned by HUGHES, *ibid.*, p. 547.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 546.

²⁷ GRIFFIN, *Catholics in the American Revolution*, 3 vols., Phila., 1907; RILEY, *The National Debt that American Protestants owe to their Brethren of the Roman Catholic Church*. Annapolis, 1914; O'BRIEN, *A Hidden Phase of American History*. New York, 1919.

prevailing English bigotry of the day.²⁸ Some of these Colleges, like St. Omer's, had been subsidized by the French King. But this sympathy with things French, which was based upon their educational days in Europe and which was strengthened by the short-sighted penal legislation of the colonies, never dulled the spirit of independence possessed by the clergy and the laity in those days. No group of colonists had less reason for being enthusiastic over the Revolution than the Catholics. The colonial attitude over the Quebec Act (1774), was sufficient to chill Catholic interest in the coming Revolution. But larger interests prevailed, and the pages of American history present the rather significant situation of one Church, persecuted from the very beginning of English colonization, throwing all its efforts into the cause of liberty, and in some cases, like that of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, then the richest private gentleman in the colonies, its wealth as well, and another Church, which had waxed fat and rich on the spoils of ecclesiastical graft and other unworthy measures, holding out to the bitter end against American independence.

It is difficult not to enter upon the story of the effort made in France at this time (1783-1784), to give an organized hierarchy to the Church in the new Republic, without considerable suspicion of all concerned. The leading fact to be kept in mind, however, for a cautious judgment on the whole episode is Franklin's prompt acquiescence in the appointment of John Carroll once the latter's name was seriously considered. The whole episode can be very easily followed in the diplomatic and ecclesiastical correspondence which we have already spoken of as the *Propaganda Documents*.²⁹

In the *Instruction*³⁰ sent by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide to Prince Doria Panphili, Archbishop of Seleucia, and Apostolic Nuncio at Paris, dated January 15, 1783, the Nuncio is reminded that the occasion of the general peace which was to be concluded among the nations of Europe was an important one for the future of the Church in the new Republic across the seas. He is informed that up to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, all the possessions of England on the continent, or on the islands, of America were under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Vicar-Apostolic of London. "The approaching declaration of the independence of all those provinces," he is informed, "will destroy the bonds of their political and civil subordination to the British government; it will thereby destroy all bonds in religious matters, and, therefore, the Vicar-Apostolic of London will be deprived of the influence and direction he has exercised until now in the religious affairs of those provinces."³¹ The Nuncio should, therefore, exert his own power with the court of France, to the end that, through the influence which the King has with the leaders of the American Congress, he may obtain the insertion of an article in the

²⁸ GUILDAY, *English Catholic Refugees on the Continent* (1558-1795), Vol. i, pp. 141, 154, 229, 275, 280, London, 1914; DEVITT, *Bohemia*, in the *ACHS Records*, Vol. xxiii, pp. 97-139; cf. HUGHES, *Educational Convoys to Europe in the Olden Times*, in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, Vol. xxix, pp. 24-39.

²⁹ See note 5.

³⁰ For the diplomatic and historical value of these Instructions, cf. CAUCHIE-MAERE, *Recueil des Instructions Générales aux Nonces de Flandre*, pp. iii-ix. Brussels, 1914.

³¹ PD, p. 4.

Treaty of Peace "concerning the free exercise and the maintenance of the Catholic religion." His Most Christian Majesty, Louis XVI, was to be approached on the question of assuming the *patronatus* of the Church in the new Republic. A plan for establishing new missions and for sending missionaries to the new Republic was to be discussed, if the opportunity offered itself. A most desirable method of organizing the Church in the United States "would be to establish in one of the principal cities a Vicar-Apostolic, with episcopal character, chosen from among the subjects of the new Republic, who should receive from the Holy See powers for the spiritual government of the Catholics of all those regions, and who, thereafter, should receive the charge of establishing various missionary stations, more or less numerous, according to the requirements of each province."³² A Bishop Vicar-Apostolic was proposed by the Holy See, not only because he would be able to guide the Church and confer on the Catholics all they needed to render their spiritual life complete, but also because "national jealousy could thus be obviated, by not constraining these new republicans to receive those sacraments [Confirmation and Holy Orders] from foreign bishops."³³ The Holy See recognized that the members of the American Congress might not be willing to allow a Catholic bishop to enter the United States; if such should prove to be the case, a native American might be appointed Prefect, with the title of Vicar-Apostolic, enjoying episcopal power, except for the administration of Holy Orders. The rule is laid down in this *Instruction* to the Nuncio that if a native American should be available for this important post, he should be preferred, whether for the simple Prefecture or for the Vicariate-Apostolic. If an available American should not be found, then Congress should be asked to allow a foreigner to be appointed. It would appear also from the text of the *Instruction* that Congress was to be given the privilege of stating whether the choice was acceptable or not. The maintenance of the new ecclesiastical head in the United States should also be discussed, and in case no help be proffered, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide would be ready to assign an allowance to the new Bishop, to the Prefect, or the Vicar-Apostolic. The Holy See no doubt hoped that if the missionaries who would go to America were Frenchmen, the King would assist them "from his royal and liberal munificence."

Less than a month later, on February 10, 1783, Doria Pamphili replied to Cardinal Antonelli that he had transmitted His Eminence's wishes to the Prime Minister, Count de Vergennes,³⁴ at a conference held on Tuesday of the preceding week. Article VIII of the peace preliminaries (signed on November 30, 1782), between England and America, had secured religious

³² PD, p. 5.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Charles Gravier Vergennes, Prime Minister of France, born at Dijon in 1717, died at Paris, 1787. Entered the diplomatic service under Chavigny, French ambassador at Lisbon. Appointed in 1750, Minister to Elector of Treves. Six years later, became Ambassador at Constantinople. Recalled in 1768, was later (1771) appointed to Stockholm. Louis XVI gave him the post of Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and it was in this capacity that he concluded the Franco-American alliance on January 26, 1778. Had he lived, he might have prevented the French Revolution.

peace to the new Republic. The Prime Minister saw no difficulty in establishing a Vicariate-Apostolic in America, with an American having episcopal power, and the Nuncio begged him to inform Mr. Franklin, the minister plenipotentiary of the new Republic, that he desired to treat with him on this important matter. The main object of France in the war was American Independence, and while John Jay and John Adams, two of the American commissioners, were very suspicious of the intentions of France, Franklin never lost the fullest confidence in our ally. France had been forced to give up so much for the hard-won independence of the new Republic that it is not surprising to find Franklin willing, probably anxious, partially to recompense France by allowing the government to have control over the Church in the United States.

Cardinal Antonelli replied on March 19, 1783, telling the Nuncio what a great consolation his letter of February 10, had been to all in Rome. He is especially cheered by the hope that Catholic missionaries will be tolerated in the United States and that a native Vicar-Apostolic will be permitted to reside in the new Republic. Six months were to pass before the Nuncio was able to report on the results of his promised interview with Mr. Franklin. On September 1, 1783, two days before the definitive Treaty of Peace was signed, Doria Pamphili wrote to the Cardinal, telling him that he was transmitting a *dossier* of three papers, marked A, B, and C, respectively, relating to the organization of the Church in the United States, and giving to the Prefect a complete account of the negotiations entered into up to that date:

I have the honor of transmitting to Your Eminence, herewith, three papers marked A, B, and C, respectively, and relating to the establishment of apostolic missions in the new republic of the United States of North America, which matter was committed to me. The first is a copy of a note or memorandum, that I sent to Mr. Franklin, minister plenipotentiary of the new republic, the second and third are copies of a note of Mr. Franklin and of some observations made by him on the subject of my note just mentioned. In order to take time to send a categorical reply to Mr. Franklin, I merely acknowledged the receipt of these papers, in which your Eminence will find Mr. Franklin to be of opinion that our court, or, in other words, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, will be free to take all measures that may be useful to the Catholics of America, without infringing the constitutions, and that the congress will not fail tacitly to approve the choice that the Sacred Congregation may make, in concert with the minister plenipotentiary of the United States of a French ecclesiastic, who, residing in France, may regulate the affairs of Catholics in America, through a suffragan there. In this connection, I am of the opinion that, rather than a French ecclesiastic, the apostolic nuncio for the time being in France, in concert with that Sacred Congregation, might, himself, invest an ecclesiastic with the character of bishop, of prefect, or of vicar-apostolic for the government in question. There being in America, as Mr. Franklin says in his note C, no college or establishment in which a Catholic ecclesiastic may receive the instruction that it is necessary for him to have, nor the hope of a public appropriation for such a purpose, Your Eminence will recognize that recourse must be had to other means in this connection, and that those suggested by Mr. Franklin in his note C, concerning the four establishments

of English Religious that exist in France, could not, and should not, be proposed, much less, accepted. The last paragraph of that note deserves all attention, tending as it does, to the attainment of desirable ends. I have thought it well to give information of the contents of these papers to the Count of Vergennes, a true statesman, full of zeal and attachment for our holy Catholic religion; and as I begged of him to facilitate the means of establishing a college in France for the education of as many priests as may be necessary for the spiritual welfare of the Roman Catholics who now are, or may come to be, in the States of the new republic, the royal minister, assuring me that he will give all the assistance that it may be in his power to lend in that connection, suggested that I speak to Monseigneur the bishop of Autun, minister of ecclesiastical benefices of this realm, in order that he, by his lights, and by his good offices, may assist in the establishment of the proposed college, at St. Malo, Nantes, L'Orient, or any other city of France, near the coast, it being necessary, however, first to obtain the requisite funds, and to know, approximately, the number of priests that the Roman Catholics of the United States may need, and whether there be in that country, individuals inclined to undertake the studies and to adopt the ecclesiastical state. Accordingly, I had an interview with Monseigneur the bishop of Autun, on Wednesday, and we agreed to confer together, on Saturday of last week, with the Count of Vergennes. To this end, on the day appointed, I went to Versailles, and the Count of Vergennes, as well as the above-named prelate, showed himself to be desirous of obtaining the funds necessary for so important an end. While this matter is being thought over, I trust that your Eminence will give me what information you have in regard to the mission of North America, and will obtain further information from the prelate who is in charge of that mission, requesting him to give the number of priests that are in those states, and the number of them that may be needed there. In quest of this information, after receiving the answer of Your Eminence, I will endeavor to obtain that the Count of Vergennes write to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, who has been minister plenipotentiary of the Most Christian King to the United States of North America for the last three years, and who is much esteemed and loved there. On the other hand, Your Eminence will deign to inform neither the ecclesiastic just mentioned nor any one else, with the exception of the Holy Father, of my negotiations with the Count of Vergennes and with Monseigneur the bishop of Autun, since it is question, as yet, of a mere project, of which it would not be well to speak before it be realized, or developed sufficiently not to be frustrated by any one who may regard the proposed establishment unfavorably. Ready ever to comply with the revered commands of Your Eminence, I subscribe myself, with all homage,

*Of Your Eminence,
the Very Humble, Devoted, and Grateful Servant,
G. ARCHBISHOP OF SELEUCIA.*

*Paris, September 1st, 1783.*³⁵

The first note (NOTE A) is a copy of a memorandum which the Nuncio had sent to Mr. Franklin on July 28, 1783, requesting him to transmit the same to the American Congress and to support it with his influence:

³⁵ PD, pp. 8-11.

Note A

Before the revolution that has just been consummated in North America, the Catholics and the missionaries of those provinces were in spiritual dependence upon the Vicar-Apostolic residing at London. It is obvious that this arrangement can not be continued; but, as it is essential that the Catholic subjects of the United States have an ecclesiastic to govern them in what concerns their religion, the Congregation of Propaganda Fide, which exists at Rome with a view to the establishment and preservation of the missions, has determined to propose to the Congress the installation of one of their Catholic subjects, in some city of the United States of North America, with the powers of Vicar-Apostolic and with the character of Bishop, or simply as Prefect-Apostolic. The establishment of a Bishop Vicar-Apostolic seems to be preferable, all the more, since this would enable the Catholic subjects of the United States to receive confirmation and Holy Orders in their own country, instead of being obliged to go to foreign countries to receive those Sacraments; and as it might happen, at times, that no one be found among the subjects of the United States qualified to be entrusted with the spiritual government, whether as Bishop or as Prefect-Apostolic, it would be necessary in such cases that Congress be pleased to consent that the choice be made among the Bishops of a foreign nation, the most friendly to the United States.³⁶

Shea tells us that the Nuncio transmitted also to the French Minister in the United States, the Chevalier de la Luzerne, a similar letter addressed to the Senior Catholic Missionary in the United States. Note B is a résumé of Franklin's reply to the Nuncio. The American Minister, after mature reflection on the matter contained in the Nuncio's letter of July 28, decided that "it would be absolutely useless to send it to Congress, which, according to its power and constitution, cannot and should not in any case intervene in the ecclesiastical affairs of any sect or religion established in America." Mr. Franklin was of the opinion that the Holy See was entirely free in taking whatever measures which might be useful to the Catholics of America, without infringing the Constitution, and that Congress would not fail to give a tacit approval to the choice made by the Sacred Congregation. But, as the Note goes on to say, it was understood that the choice in question would be "of a French ecclesiastic; who, residing in France, may regulate the spiritual affairs of the Catholics who live, or who may come to establish themselves, in those states, through a suffragan residing in America."

Note B

Observations on the Note of M. the Apostolic Nuncio.

Mr. Franklin, after reading the note of M. the Nuncio and reflecting upon it maturely, believes that it would be absolutely useless to send it to the Congress, which according to its power and constitution cannot, and should not, in any case, intervene in the ecclesiastical affairs of any sect or of any religion established in America. Each particular state has reserved to itself by its own constitution the right to protect its members, to tolerate their religious opinions and not to interfere with the matter, as long as they do not disturb civil order.

³⁶ PD, p. 11.

Mr. Franklin is therefore of opinion that the Court of Rome may take, of its own initiative, all the measures that may be useful to the Catholics of America, without disregard to the constitutions and that Congress will not fail to give its tacit approval to the choice that the Court of Rome in concert with the minister of the United States may make of a French Ecclesiastic who, residing in France, may regulate the spiritual affairs of the Catholics who may live or who may come to establish themselves in those states through a suffragan residing in America.

Besides many political reasons that may make that arrangement desirable, the Apostolic Nuncio must find in it many others that may be favorable to the intentions of the Court of Rome.³⁷

A third NOTE (C) contained a most surprising suggestion. The Cardinal Prefect had laid stress on the necessity of maintenance for the Vicar-Apostolic of the new Republic, and Franklin suggests to the Nuncio that, since there is in America no college or establishment where a Catholic ecclesiastic might receive the necessary preparation, the four monasteries of the English Benedictine monks, the annual revenues of which amounted to almost 60,000 livres, might be used for this purpose. "It is possible," so runs NOTE C, "that the King of France, to please the Court of Rome and to strengthen the bonds of friendship with the United States, would permit these establishments to train, instruct, and in part support the ecclesiastics who would be used in America."

Note C on American Catholics

The American revolution, by separating the interest of the colonies from those of the mother country changes the relations that bound the Catholics of America with those who live on the English dominion. The unity of the present governments seems to require that those bonds be diminished and weakened by taking from the British ministry all influence over the subjects of the United States.

In the greater number of the colonies, there is no endowment, no fixed revenue, for the support of a clergy of whatever denomination; legislation, viewing this subject from the standpoint of a more general freedom, has been unwilling to make a public charge of a tax that should be only voluntary and private. Neither is there a college or public establishment where a Catholic ecclesiastic may receive necessary instruction. These are two equally essential points to be considered.

There are in France four establishments of English monks, the total revenues of which may amount to 50,000 or 60,000 livres. These monks are few. The want of subjects makes those who remain useless at least.

It is possible that the King of France, to please the Court of Rome, and to strengthen the bonds of friendship with the United States, would permit these establishments to train, instruct and in part support the ecclesiastics who would be used in America.

It would be expedient that one of the Bishops named by the Holy See should be a subject of the king, residing in France, in a position, always, to act in accordance with the Nuncio of His Holiness and the American minister, and to adopt with them the means of training the ecclesiastics, which might be agreeable to Congress and useful to American Catholics.³⁸

³⁷ PD, p. 12.

³⁸ PD, pp. 12-13.

From these three memoranda it is clear that a definite policy regarding the American Church had been decided upon between March and September, 1783. Cardinal Antonelli's concession that a foreigner might be chosen as head of the American Church was evidently being made capital of in Paris, and whoever originated the scheme, found in Franklin a willing tool in the project of subjecting his Catholic fellow-citizens to a foreign superior, nominated by French influence and residing in France. The Nuncio was not favorably disposed toward the suggestion that the property of the Anglo-Benedictine Congregation be confiscated for the purpose of educating priests for the American Mission.³⁹ Vergennes also saw the injustice of Franklin's proposal and intimated to the Nuncio that Talleyrand would be the proper official to consult in this aspect of the affair. By September, 1783, therefore, the French scheme was fully developed. Besides a French Vicar-Apostolic for the United States, with episcopal character, who would rule the Church here through a suffragan or Vicar-General, an American Seminary was to be erected in one of the seacoast towns of France, supported by the revenues of the English monastic establishments in France which were to be confiscated for this purpose. How much money would be necessary for the project would depend upon the number of priests needed in the United States. The Nuncio called on Talleyrand and a conference was agreed upon between Doria Pamphili, Talleyrand, and Vergennes at Versailles. The Prime Minister and the Bishop of Autun both showed themselves desirous of carrying out the American Seminary idea. Accordingly, the Nuncio was directed to ask at Rome for further information on the American mission, namely, the number of priests already in the states, and the number that was still needed for the Church there. The Nuncio intended also, he tells Antonelli, to ask Vergennes to inquire from de la Luzerne, then French Minister at New York, "and who is much esteemed and loved there," for information on these two points.

As we have seen, the American clergy, although ignorant up to this time of the intrigue, had already begun to create their own organization during the peace year (1783-1784). The Whitemarsh meeting of the clergy on June 27, 1783, had decided upon a Chapter Form of Government. Father John Lewis, the Vicar-General of the London Vicar-Apostolic up to the outbreak of the war, was the acknowledged head of the Church in the United States down to the General Chapter of the American Clergy, on November 6, 1783, when his nomination as Superior for the whole Mission was sent to Rome. News of the proceedings of the June meeting had no doubt been reported to the Nuncio, for his letter of September 1, 1783, as has been seen above, contains a rather emphatic suggestion that silence on the whole plan should be kept: "On the other hand, Your Eminence will deign to inform neither the ecclesiastic just mentioned [the Superior of the Mission in the United States] nor anyone else, with the exception of the Holy Father, of my negotiations with the Count de Vergennes, and with Monseigneur the Bishop of Autun, since it is question, as yet, of a mere project, of which it would not be well to speak before it be

³⁹ Cf. TAUNTON, *The English Black Monks*, Vol. ii, chapters xvii-xix, London, 1897.

realized, or developed sufficiently not to be frustrated by anyone who may regard the proposed establishment unfavorably."

There were, indeed, several quarters from which opposition might legitimately be expected. The English Benedictines in France had dwindled to a mere shadow of their former greatness, St. Edmund's Monastery, in Paris, for example, being reduced to such a state that during the latter half of the eighteenth century "it was seriously considered whether it would not be as well to disband the house altogether."⁴⁰ All the English religious houses in France were indeed to be swept away in the whirlwind of the French Revolution ten years later, their sequestration taking place on February 18, 1793, a few days after the declaration of war between England and France;⁴¹ but no religious order, with the great antiquity of the Anglo-Benedictine Congregation behind it, could acquiesce without a protest in the heartless project contained in Franklin's NOTE C to the Nuncio. There was a lack of generosity in the plan, if, as Taunton states, Benjamin Franklin during his stay in Paris (1776-1784), was a constant guest at St. Edmund's Monastery, in Paris.⁴² Another source of opposition was naturally the American Catholics themselves. Priests and people were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of independence—at that time more intense in American life than ever afterwards; and the proposal to place them under a "foreign prince or potentate," was obnoxious to a nation which had just forged its way to freedom, and at such awful cost. Whether the English Benedictines became aware of the Franklin proposal we do not know. Both Taunton and Ward are silent on the matter, and both had access to archives which should have contained documents on the subject, had it been discussed.

We know that the French Vicar-Apostolic project was first made known to Carroll through former English associates. Carroll expresses his great surprise in a letter to Plowden, dated September 15, 1784, that his old friend Dr. Franklin had become a party to the Nuncio's intrigue,⁴³ which, however, was not meeting with the success its leaders expected. On September 27, 1783, Antonelli wrote to the Papal Nuncio at Paris, telling him that the Holy Father, Pius VI (1775-1799), had greatly commended his zeal and sagacity in having obtained the active cooperation of Vergennes and Talleyrand "in this salutary work." He reminds the Nuncio that "this Holy Congregation does not withdraw from its original offer to assist in the support of a Vicar-Apostolic endowed with episcopal character, or of a bishop, if this should be preferred, whom it will be necessary to put at the head of the Catholics in the United States." Very wisely, Antonelli rejected "without further discussion" the Franklin project of suppressing the four monasteries of English Benedictines in France. Antonelli's letter of this date is one of the most interesting in this correspondence:

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. ii, p. 287.

⁴¹ WARD, *Dawn of the Catholic Revival in England*, Vol. ii, p. 78, London, 1909.

⁴² TAUNTON, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 285.

⁴³ SHEA, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 218, note.

[Rome], *September 27, 1783.*

Your Lordship has so well begun the great matter of a plan for missions in the provinces of the new republic of the United States of North America that I do not doubt that you will soon bring it to a most happy termination. The Holy Father, who has been informed of your action, has greatly commended your zeal, and your sagacity in having interested the Count of Vergennes and Monseigneur the bishop of Autun in this salutary work, the former, for his protection as worthy prime minister, the latter, for the subsistence of the new workers, in view of his ministry of ecclesiastical benefices in that kingdom. This Holy Congregation, however, does not withdraw from its original offer to assist in the support of the Vicar-Apostolic endowed with the episcopal character, or of a bishop, if this should be preferred, whom it will be necessary to put at the head of the Catholics in the United States.

Conformably with the judicious suggestions of Your Lordship, the following points should be established:

I. The proposition of Mr. Franklin, to suppress the four monasteries of English Benedictines that exist in France, should be rejected, without further discussion. Besides the odium that would be aroused in the nation, which would be highly displeasing to the pacific and generous spirit of His Most Christian Majesty, grievous injury would be done to the missions of England, if the four monasteries in question should be suppressed, since the English Benedictine congregation, which furnishes nearly forty missionaries who work for the good of souls in England, would be reduced to the one monastery that, with the four in France, constitutes the total number of the convents of that worthy congregation.

II. The Nuncio to France, as Your Lordship opportunely suggested to Mr. Franklin, should have the supervision of these American missions, as is the case with the Nuncio at Brussels for the missions of Holland, and he would come to an understanding with the minister of the United States at Paris, whenever it was necessary to act in accordance with him for the greater good of those missions. This arrangement would also be compatible with an agent of the Vicar-Apostolic, or of the Bishop to be established in the United States, at Paris, in the person of some French ecclesiastic, who, upon occasion, would act in concert with the minister of those States and with the nuncio. It is to be desired that, some day, this new republic may have a Catholic minister at Paris; but, in the present circumstances, in which the minister is heretical, possibly Presbyterian, or Non-Conformist, which are the dominant sects in those states, it would be desirable to have a French ecclesiastic in private correspondence with the head of that mission, saving always the formal correspondence between the nuncio and the minister.

III. It was suggested above, and is repeated now, that it appears very necessary to establish that the superior, who is to have jurisdiction over all the Catholics of the American Republic, be invested with the character of bishop, with the title of Vicar-Apostolic, or, if acceptable, that he be the bishop of a diocese in that country. He may take his title from any city in the provinces of that republic that may seem to be the one best adapted for his residence. As the greater number of Catholics are in Maryland and in Pennsylvania, it would appear that the residence should be established in one of these two states; but it will be better to determine this point according to what may be most satisfactory to the minister and to the states. There is no doubt

that all the missionaries should depend upon the Vicar-Apostolic, or bishop, and receive from him their powers and destination among the various stations, according to requirements. And, to that end, the Prelate will be invested with the most ample powers, as for instance, those of the first formula.

IV. As to the subjects to be chosen, for the vicariate-apostolic, or the episcopacy, as well as for missionaries, present conditions seem clearly to indicate that they should be taken from among the ecclesiastical subjects of His Most Christian Majesty. But if in time any native should be found available for the sacred ministry, there is no doubt that the Vicar or Bishop would be free to ordain him, and to employ him in the missions.

V. It would be most useful to establish a college for the sole benefit of these missionaries, at Nantes, St. Malo, l'Orient, or some other place, near the ocean; but it may be foreseen that the magnitude of the idea would make its realization difficult. It is clearly understood that Monseigneur d'Autun, by his favor, could overcome all obstacles; but great and expensive things, as would be the creation of a new college, should not be sought.

VI. Consideration might be given, therefore, to the idea of increasing to some extent the income of the Seminary of Foreign Missions, where ecclesiastics, already, are trained for the East Indies; or, better still, the Seminary of Saint Esprit, the ecclesiastics of which are destined to the missions of South America, at Cayenne and Guiana, imposing upon it the obligation of maintaining there, for the present, a reasonable number of ecclesiastics, to be sent under the suggested authority in America to the provinces of the United States. If, to begin, eight or ten missionaries are sent, besides the vicar, or bishop, this will provide sufficiently for the needs of the faithful in question, the number of whom is not precisely known to this Holy Congregation, which is also without exact information of the number of the old workers, who, for the greater part, were of the suppressed Society of Jesus; for, neither directly, nor through the Vicar-Apostolic of London, has news been received concerning those Catholics, of whom some information was sent to Your Lordship in the instruction of the 15th of January of the present year.

VII. If the number of workers suggested should prove to be insufficient, it will be time, then, to think of other means of study for a greater number of subjects, and it will be possible, even, if there be a desire to form a national clergy, to establish at the college of the Propaganda, here, two or three places for Americans, as has been done for so many nations of Asia, Africa, and Europe.

Your Lordship, however, who is better informed of the state of affairs, will know which of the points noted above should be communicated to the minister, and which not; upon this point, His Holiness and this Congregation repose on your known zeal and activity, of which there are so many exceptional proofs; and thanking Your Lordship for the letter which you enclosed from Monseigneur the Vicar-Apostolic of London, I remain, with all esteem, heartily yours.⁴⁴

The hierarchal character of the French project as outlined by Antonelli was as follows: At the head of American ecclesiastical affairs would be the Papal Nuncio in Paris, who would, as Ordinary, act with the knowledge and understanding of the American minister in Paris, "whenever it was necessary

⁴⁴ PD, pp. 14-17.

to act in accordance with him for the greater good of those missions." Subordinate to the Nuncio would be a French Vicar-Apostolic or Bishop, with an official agent at Paris, who would act in concert with the American minister and with the Nuncio. Antonelli hoped that some day the new Republic might have a Catholic minister at Paris; but until that should occur, it would be best to have a French ecclesiastic act as agent for the American mission. Apart from this, there would always be, he explained, "the formal correspondence between the Nuncio and the minister." The third point in Antonelli's letter is quite significant: It is becoming more evident, in fact, it appears very necessary, to appoint a bishop for the United States, who should have his See in that country. Since the greater number of Catholics live in Maryland and in Pennsylvania, it would appear, he says, that the Bishop's See should be established in either one of these two states. Whoever is appointed, whether as bishop or as Vicar-Apostolic, should have episcopal jurisdiction over the Church in the states. The choice of an ecclesiastic to occupy this post is clearly indicated by present conditions—"he should be taken from among the ecclesiastical subjects of His Most Christian Majesty." Not only was the ecclesiastical head to be chosen, but the missionaries also for the Church in the new Republic, from among the French clergy. It might happen, in time, Antonelli adds, that if an American be found available for the sacred ministry, "there is no doubt that the Vicar or Bishop would be free to ordain him, and to employ him in the missions." It may be necessary for the reader's benefit to emphasize the fact that the ecclesiastic who thus describes the early American Church was not only a Cardinal but was also the Prefect of the Congregation which had for its purpose the propagation of the faith in non-Catholic lands. There were means at his disposal for a thorough acquaintance with the state of the American Church, but those means were seldom employed. The interest shown in the organization of the Church in the United States in these early years was mainly political and financial, and from this date down to the first Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1829, no impartial reader will be able to accuse the Roman authorities of accurate knowledge of American Catholic affairs in general or of American conditions, geographical and otherwise, in particular. The American clergy will be at the mercy of meddlers and at the mercy of ignorant chiefs in the Congregation to which they are obliged to look as to their superiors, until an Archbishop of Baltimore breaks the restraint the American clergy must have felt, and appeals directly to the Pope in a letter which lacks nothing in its indignation at the sad situation in which Roman curial ignorance had placed them.⁴⁵

Antonelli's letter of September 27, 1783, must have been written with cognizance of the plans formulated by the American clergy. He persists,

⁴⁵ Archbishop Neale to Pope Pius VII, Georgetown, March 6, 1817. Cf. SHEA, *op. cit.*, Vol. iii, p. 34. Cf. Marechal's *Report of 1818* in the CHR, Vol. i, pp. 439-453. An interesting side-light on the situation will be found in S. B. MONSE (of telegraph fame), *Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberty of the United States*, p. 141. New York, 1835; it was published originally under the pen-name "Brutus," in the *New York Observer* (1834-1835).

however, in the American Seminary project. He directs the Nuncio's attention to the idea of combining the Seminary project with either the Seminary of Foreign Missions or the Seminary of the Holy Ghost in Paris. If the income of either of these establishments was to be augmented for the purpose by Talleyrand, they could be required to furnish a certain number of missionaries for the missions in the United States. Eight or ten missionaries, he thinks, would be a sufficient number to send to the United States; but of this he is not quite certain, because the number of Catholics in the United States "is not precisely known to this Holy Congregation, which is also without exact information of the number of the old workers." Later on, he deems, there might be room for a national American College at Rome, for the formation of a national clergy.

On December 15, 1783, Franklin wrote to Vergennes that the delay in the spiritual organization of the American Church was causing him some concern:

I understand that the Bishop or spiritual person who superintends or governs the Roman Catholic clergy in the United States of America resides in London, and is supposed to be under obligations to that Court and subject to be influenced by its Ministers. This gives me some uneasiness, and I cannot but wish that one should be appointed to that office who is of this nation and who may reside here among our friends. I beg Your Excellency to think a little of this matter and afford me your counsels upon it.⁴⁶

"But for this positive evidence," says Shea, "we could scarcely believe that Dr. Franklin lent himself to a plan for treating his Catholic countrymen in this manner and helping a conspiracy to subject them not to a Superior chosen from among themselves, but to one nominated by the French Court and residing in France."⁴⁷ Franklin certainly had opportunities in Paris of learning that the Vicar-Apostolic of London had exercised no jurisdiction over the Church in America from the outbreak of the Revolution, and Bishop Talbot's refusal to recognize the American Church as part of his charge was too well known at the time to have been ignored by one so fortunately placed as Franklin. On receiving Franklin's letter, Vergennes made a memorandum, which shows that the Prime Minister was not altogether satisfied about the French Vicar-Apostolic plan, and that he was better acquainted with the situation than Franklin. "Mr. Franklin," he says, "represents that since the Bishop governing the Catholic Clergy in America resides in London, it is to our interest to name someone for that charge who could reside in the United States." Franklin had already consulted Archbishop de Cicé of Bordeaux on the Seminary subject, doubtless at the suggestion of Talleyrand, as we learn in a letter from de Cicé to Vergennes, dated December 27, 1783:

I regard it a duty, Count, to inform you of the proposition just made me by Mr. Franklin. The object is to secure to religion among the Catholics of the United States more order and facility in the number and choice of ministers necessary for them. I reasonably presume that in this matter Mr. Franklin is the interpreter of the wishes of his Catholic fellow-citizens. He seems to

⁴⁶ ACHS *Researches*, Vol. xi, p. 190.

⁴⁷ *Op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 215.

desire that to attain more securely what they propose, they should have in France a titled ecclesiastic, appointed to provide for the wants of the Church.⁴⁸

The truth is that Franklin was not only acting blindly in the whole affair, but was proceeding without the knowledge of the Catholic leaders in the new Republic. Certainly his wishes regarding the chief pastor of the flock in the United States were at variance with those of the American clergy, as evidenced in the Whitemarsh meeting of 1783-1784. The Archbishop of Bordeaux, while not a party to the enterprise, was brought into the affair, on account of the Bordeaux American Seminary scheme, of which the correspondence speaks often during these two years. Cicé acted very cautiously, albeit generously, in the matter. Among the *Franklin MSS.* at the Library of Congress (fol. 2617), there is a letter from the Archbishop of Bordeaux to Franklin, assuring him of his eagerness to second the worthy efforts of Talleyrand and the American minister to supply the American Mission with priests, but asking for more detailed information before he gave his consent to the Bordeaux project.⁴⁹

It would appear, from a letter of Antonelli to Doria Pamphili, of June 9, 1784, that Talleyrand had first made the proposition that one of the Seminaries in Bordeaux be used for the American Seminary project.

Meanwhile Vergennes' commission to Luzerne had not been neglected. That worthy French Catholic gentleman had consulted with the leaders of the American Republic and on January 31, 1784, he wrote to Vergennes from Annapolis, stating that while Congress did not wish to take any action in the matter which was beyond its competency, the delegates had assured him that a Catholic bishop would be very well received. That part of the letter which touches on the subject is as follows:

Monseigneur the Apostolic Nuncio has made some propositions in the name of His Holiness to Doctor Franklin in regard to the sending of a Bishop or a Vicar-Apostolic whom the Holy Father desires to place over the Roman Catholic Churches of this continent. The Congress has respectfully welcomed that overture; it has been unable, however, to take action in this matter, which is not of the competency of Congress. It is a matter that concerns the Catholics alone; and the delegates who have spoken to me on the subject have assured me that a Catholic bishop would be very well received in the state of Pennsylvania and much more so in Maryland, where there are many Catholics, providing the prelate carefully avoided to assume any temporal jurisdiction or authority. The Congress, in general, would be pleased at the residence of a prelate, who by conferring the sacrament of Holy Orders on the priests of these parts, would relieve them of the necessity of receiving it in London or in Quebec, as has been done in the past. Some of the delegates even believe that a Catholic bishop would not refuse to confer Holy Orders on the Anglican ministers of America, who, until now, have been obliged to procure their ordination at London; but this practice does not seem to me to be compatible to the profession that those who receive Holy Orders must make or with the examination that they must undergo. The State

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ACHS Researches*, Vol. xxvii (1910), p. 345.

Legislatures and Congress refrain from entangling themselves with religious matters.⁵⁰

This letter was no doubt communicated at once to the Nuncio, who probably sent it to Propaganda. On May 11, 1784, as we read in the *Secret Journals of Congress*, one of the resolutions passed was to the effect that Dr. Franklin be requested to notify the Nuncio at Paris of the American policy of non-interference in religious affairs:

Resolved, That Doctor Franklin be desired to notify the apostolic nuncio at Versailles, that Congress will always be pleased to testify their respect to his sovereign and state; but that the subject of his application to Doctor Franklin, being purely spiritual, is without the jurisdiction and powers of Congress, who have no authority to permit or refuse it, these powers being reserved to the several states individually.⁵¹

This resolution could not have reached Franklin before the end of the summer, but the shrewd American Minister had already reached the same conclusion. Antonelli, likewise, was beginning to see the wisdom of appointing one of the American missionaries. Writing to Luzerne, under date of May 12, 1784, he states that the Sacred Congregation desires full information of the condition of the Church in the United States. (The four points of information asked for are those which Father Carroll eventually answers on March 1, 1785, in his *Relation*)—

Before the American revolution, the Catholics and missionaries of those states, in what concerns religion, were under the vigilance and direction of the Vicar-Apostolic residing in London. That revolution having separated the interest of the United States from those of England, and having entirely changed the government of those states, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda has seen the necessity of taking other measures for the government of these missions; hence, Monseigneur, the Archbishop of Seleria, Apostolic Nuncio at Paris, was charged by this Congregation to make on that subject to the Congress of the United States some proposition, not less useful to religion and to the spiritual assistance of the Catholics than acceptable to the government of those States.

Monseigneur the Nuncio mentioned the matter to Mr. Franklin, who, however, answered that, having seriously reflected on it he considered it absolutely useless to refer the question to the Congress, which, by its constitutions and faculties, could not, and should not, entangle itself in ecclesiastical affairs, and consequently, that it was in the power of the Court of Rome to take all measures that might be of advantage to the Catholics in America, without offending the constitutions. After receiving this answer, the Congregation, by order of His Holiness, instructed Monseigneur the Nuncio to agree with the ministers of His Most Christian Majesty, and with the minister of the United States, upon the most desirable means of giving to the missions of North America the stability and development of which they might be capable.

His Most Christian Majesty having wished, on such an occasion, to give a new proof of his piety and of the interest that he takes in the preservation and extension of the Catholic religion in all parts of the world, found no difficulty

⁵⁰ PD, pp. 19–20.

⁵¹ Vol iii, p. 493. Boston, 1821.

in agreeing to a plan that is no less useful to the Catholics of the United States than to the government of those provinces; but, to establish a stable condition of things, and to forestall all the objections and difficulties that might present themselves in its realization, it is necessary to have certain information that may make it possible to compass that object.

1st. To have exact knowledge of the conduct and capacities of the ecclesiastics and missionaries who are in the various provinces of North America; which one of them would be the most worthy, and the most acceptable to the assembly of those provinces, to be created Bishop *in partibus* and invested with the character of vicar-apostolic, considering that it will be desirable to fix the residence in that province in which there is the greatest number of Catholics.

2d. If there be among those ecclesiastics a native of the country who may be among the most worthy, in equality of merits, he would be preferred to any of another nationality; and whenever the provinces would be in lack of missionaries, a Frenchman will be sent to establish himself there, residing in the province suggested above.

3d. To know the number of the ecclesiastics and missionaries, as, also, that of the Catholics in the different provinces and their area, assuming that the greater number of them is to be found in Pennsylvania and Maryland. It would be well, however, to know the same in regard to the other provinces.

4th. To know if there be schools in those provinces, where the Latin language may be learnt, and where those youths who wish to prepare for the ecclesiastic state may have studied the humanities before repairing to France or to Rome for the study of philosophy and of theology.⁵²

On this same date, May 12, 1784, the Nuncio also wrote to Luzerne, at New York, asking him to assist Propaganda in ascertaining full knowledge of the state of affairs in the Church of the United States. He incloses a letter which he has drawn up by order of Propaganda, which he begs Luzerne to deliver "to one of the oldest missionaries of those provinces." He does not touch in this inclosed letter on the subject of the Bishop Vicar-Apostolic or on the manner of his selection, but he adds that "the ex-Jesuit, Mr. Carroll of Maryland, has been spoken of to me with eulogy, this Carroll being the same who was educated at St. Omer, and who, in 1776, was sent by the Congress to Canada, with Mr. Franklin and other commissioners. I hope that Your Lordship will be pleased to give me information concerning him, and will let me know whether you consider him worthy to be named bishop *in partibus* and vicar-apostolic."⁵³

Shea intimates that this came about through the English Jesuits, who had become aware of the French intrigue, and he states that Plowden, Carroll's great friend, on hearing of the intrigue, wrote at once to Franklin to dissuade the American minister from the French scheme. Fathers Sewall and Mattingly, natives of Maryland, were then in England, and they added their protests to that of Plowden, explaining to Franklin that out of respect and consideration for the missionaries then in the United States no appointment should be made without their participation and consent. Plowden states this to Carroll in a letter dated September 2, 1784. It is not certain that this intervention

⁵² PD, pp. 20-22.

⁵³ *Ibid*, pp. 22-23.

preceded the letter of the Nuncio to Luzerne of May 12, 1784, but from this time on the French scheme was doomed. Franklin's eyes were opened, says Shea, and as he knew John Carroll personally, "he must have felt not a little chagrined to find himself made even indirectly the medium of impeaching the loyalty of the Carrolls and other patriotic American Catholics, priests and laymen. It is certain that he at once determined that sound policy required him to favor the appointment of an American missionary as Superior of the Catholics in the United States, and he certainly from this time exerted all his influence to press the appointment of Rev. Mr. Carroll, to whose qualifications he could bring the testimony of personal knowledge and daily intercourse for a considerable period."⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the project was dragging itself tediously to an end. On May 17, 1784, Doria Pamphili wrote to Antonelli (referring to his letter of April 26), stating that, on May 3, a conference was held at Versailles on the very important matter of the government of the missions in the provinces of the new Republic of the United States of North America, with Vergennes, Talleyrand, and himself present. The Prime Minister read Luzerne's dispatch from Annapolis of January 31, 1784. The Nuncio gave an abstract of His Eminence's letter of September 27, 1783. The chief matter discussed at the conference was the supply of the clergy for the American missions. It was decided that the Nuncio should send two letters; one to Luzerne and the other to one of the missionaries in America (those mentioned above, May 12, 1784), asking for information on the needs of the Church in the United States. The place to educate the students for the American Missions was also discussed. Paris, it was decided, would not be desirable, since only philosophy, canon and civil law, and theology were taught in the Seminaries there. The students would need a college education before beginning these studies, and for this purpose Talleyrand suggested that the Archbishop of Bordeaux, an intimate friend of the Bishop of Autun, should be asked to arrange for the reception of these students in one of the Seminaries in Bordeaux.

Since Mr. Franklin had spoken to him of the merits and good reputation of Father Carroll, the Nuncio hopes that the Holy See will be pleased to hear this, and he avers that Franklin and many members of Congress would welcome Carroll's appointment to the vicariate to be established in America.

The letter which the Nuncio inclosed in his dispatch to Luzerne, on May 12, 1784, addressed to "one of the missionaries living in America," was as follows:

The interests of religion requiring that new information be had of the missions that are established in the United States of North America, the Congregation of the Propaganda has ordered me to ask you for detailed information of the present conditions of those missions. I beg of you to let me know, at the same time, what number of missionaries would be necessary for the service of those stations and to secure spiritual assistance to the Catholic subjects of the United States; which are the provinces where there are Catholics, and where the greatest number of Catholics are to be found, and lastly, whether there be, among the natives of that country, subjects available

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, Vol. ii, pp. 216-218.

to receive Holy Orders and to exercise the functions of a missionary. I will be very thankful to you, personally, for the precision and celerity with which you may be kind enough to procure and to forward this information for me.⁵⁵

Luzerne had probably left for France when the letter arrived, and the chargé d'affaires, Marbois, informed Reyneval, Vergennes' secretary, on August 15, 1784, that he had sent the letter to Mr. Charles Carroll, asking him to give it to the oldest missionary. Shea says that this letter was addressed by the Nuncio to the Rev. John Carroll.⁵⁶ This is no doubt incorrect. Mr. Charles Carroll was asked by Marbois to give it to the oldest missionary and he relieved himself of responsibility in the matter by sending it to his cousin, Father Carroll. Father Carroll was not the oldest missionary, nor was he the Superior of the clergy at that time, but he was known to Franklin, and his reply would probably have greater weight with that statesman in the matter under consideration. On May 31, 1784, the Nuncio informed Antonelli that he had sent to Vergennes copies of the two letters of May 12, one to Luzerne and one to the oldest missionary.

On June 9, 1784, the whole matter was brought to an abrupt close by the action of the Holy See in appointing John Carroll "head of the missions in the provinces of the new Republic of the United States of North America." This action had a double effect: that of officially ending the jurisdiction of the Vicar-Apostolic of London over the Catholics in the former English Colonies, and that of giving to the Church in the United States its own autonomy under the jurisdiction of Propaganda. We have for this date, June 9, 1784, a letter from Antonelli to the Nuncio, which states that John Carroll had been appointed Prefect-Apostolic of the United States on that day, and refers to the fact that prior to the Nuncio's dispatch of May 17, 1784, the Congregation of Propaganda had received the Petition from the priests in America in which they requested that Father Lewis should be constituted their Superior. Antonelli inclosed copies of these letters for the Nuncio's perusal, and pointed out that Carroll's name is in the last place among the nominees sent by the American missionaries. "This fact shows," he says, "that Carroll has not cooperated with the earnest solicitation of Mr. Franklin in his behalf, and, consequently, it has helped to give him the preference over Lowis [*sic*], who, moreover, being 64 years of age, as the letters in question show, would seem to deserve a rest. We are not informed of the age of Carroll [he was then 49 years old], but it may be assumed to be a much more vigorous one than that of Lowis [*sic*] since he is named last in the petition."⁵⁷

A second letter of this same date, June 9, 1784, inclosed in the one to the Nuncio and addressed to Father Carroll, which the new Superior received on November 26, 1784, announced officially to the Church in America the decision reached by the Holy See:

⁵⁵ PD, pp. 27-28.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 221.

⁵⁷ PD, p. 30.

Rome, June 9, 1784.

Very Rev. Sir:

In order to preserve and defend Catholicity in the Thirteen United States of North America, the Supreme Pontiff of the Church, Pius VI, and this Sacred Congregation have thought it extremely proper to designate a pastor who should, permanently and independently of any ecclesiastical power, except the same Sacred Congregation, attend to the spiritual necessities of the Catholic flock. In the appointment of such a pastor, the Sacred Congregation would have readily cast its eyes on the Rev. John Lewis if his advanced age and the labors he has already undergone in the vineyard of the Lord, had not deterred it from imposing on him a new and very heavy burden; for he seems to require repose rather than arduous labor. As then, Rev. Sir, you have given conspicuous proofs of piety and zeal, and it is known that your appointment will please and gratify many members of that republic, and especially Mr. Franklin, the eminent individual who represents the same republic at the court of the Most Christian King, the Sacred Congregation, with the approbation of his Holiness, has appointed you Superior of the Mission in the thirteen United States of North America, and has communicated to you the faculties, which are necessary to the discharge of that office; faculties which are also communicated to the other priests of the same States, except the administration of confirmation, which is reserved for you alone, as the enclosed documents will show.

These arrangements are meant to be only temporary. For it is the intention of his Holiness soon to charge a Vicar-Apostolic, invested with the title and character of bishop, with the care of those states, that he may attend to ordination and other episcopal functions. But, to accomplish this design, it is of great importance that we should be made acquainted with the state of the orthodox religion in those thirteen states. Therefore we request you to forward to us, as soon as possible, a correct report, stating carefully the number of Catholics in each state; what is their condition, their piety and what abuses exist; also how many missionary priests labor now in this vineyard of the Lord; what are their qualifications, their zeal, their mode of support. For though the Sacred Congregation wish not to meddle with temporal things, it is important for the establishment of laborers, that we should know what are the ecclesiastical revenues, if any there are, and it is believed there are some. In the meantime for fear the want of missionaries should deprive the Catholics of spiritual assistance, it has been resolved to invite hither two youths from the states of Maryland and Pennsylvania, to educate them at the expense of the Sacred Congregation in the Urban College; they will afterwards, on returning to their country, be substitutes in the mission. We leave to your solicitude the care of selecting and sending them. You will make choice of those who have more promising talents and a good constitution, who are not less than twelve, nor more than fifteen years of age; who by their proficiency in the sanctuary may give great hopes of themselves. You may address them to the excellent archbishop of Seleucia, Apostolic Nuncio at Paris, who is informed of their coming. If the young men selected are unable to defray the expenses of the voyage, the Sacred Congregation will provide for them; we even wish to be informed by you frankly and accurately of the necessary traveling expenses, to serve as a rule for the future. Such are the things I had to signify to you; and whilst I am confident you will discharge the office committed to you with all zeal, solicitude and fidelity, and more than

answer the high opinion we have formed of you, I pray God that he may grant you all peace and happiness.

*L. Card Antonelli,
Prefect.*

*Stephen Borgia,
Secretary.⁵⁸*

Father Carroll received the news of his appointment from several sources, namely—a) August 20, 1784, Father Thorpe's letter of June 9, from Rome; b) September 17-18, 1784, Father Charles Plowden's letter of July 3, from England; c) November 7-8, 1784, Barbé de Marbois' letter of October 27, from New York; d) November 26, 1784, Cardinal Antonelli's letter of June 9, from Rome.

(a) Father Thorpe's letter of June 9 announced his appointment, the nature of the faculties imparted by Propaganda, particularly the power of administering Confirmation, and stated that as soon as the necessary information of the state of the Church in America reached Propaganda, the Holy See would promote him to the dignity and character of a Bishop. This letter Carroll presented to his brethren at the Whitmarsh Chapter on October 11, 1784. The Chapter passed three important resolutions based upon the decision that a Superior *in spiritualibus* was adequate "to the present exigencies of religion in this country": (1) That a Bishop was unnecessary; (2) that if one be sent [*i. e.*, not elected by themselves], he should not be entitled to support from the clergy estates; (3) that a Committee of Three [Fathers Diderick, Matthews, and Mosley] be empowered to send a *Memorial* to Rome against the appointment of a Bishop.⁵⁹ This *Memorial* was prepared at once; and on December 9, 1784, Father Bernard Diderick wrote to Carroll as follows:

Port Tobacco, December 9, 1784.

Rev. Sir: We send you a copy of the letter we have drawn up to send to Rome. We hope it will not be disagreeable to you, as your intended promotion seemed to give you much uneasiness. We should be happy, in case of a bishop's being appointed here, that you should be the person, as we have not any objection to your person and qualities. But as we look upon it to be unnecessary, and hurtful to the good of religion, we have sent this letter according to what was determined in chapter.

We are, with due respect, Rev. Sir,

Your most obed't and humble servants,

BERNARD DIDERICK,
IGNATIUS MATTHEWS.⁶⁰

The *Memorial* was as follows:

Most Holy Father:

Of the twenty-two secular priests living in the thirteen United States of North America, six were appointed a few months ago to deliberate together upon the welfare of the Catholics in this part of the world. Having assembled for this purpose, they expressed the opinion that there is not the least

⁵⁸ SHEA, *op. cit.*, Vol. ii, pp. 243-245.

⁵⁹ HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Documents, Vol. ii, p. 633.

⁶⁰ *United States Catholic Magazine*, Vol. iii, p. 797.

necessity for a bishop in this country, because there is no institution as yet for the education of youth and their subsequent preparation for holy orders. I, Bernard Diderick, have been requested by the committee to notify your holiness of this sentiment, and to acquaint you also with the following circumstances:

1. The majority of the Protestant population here are averse to a Roman Catholic prelate, and for this reason the episcopal office if introduced would most likely awaken their jealousy against us.

2. We are not able to support a bishop in a manner becoming his station, and at the same time to supply the necessary wants of our fellow laborers in the ministry; moreover, the Catholics cannot be induced to aid us with their means in effecting this object.

3. Were it even admitted that the two points just mentioned would present no difficulty, we are entirely at a loss to see how the greater number of missionaries, whose cooperation would be so very desirable in this immense region, could be furnished with the means of passing to this country.

We therefore humbly entreat your holiness not to persist in the design of conferring the episcopal dignity upon any individual in these parts, unless the necessary provision be made in some other quarter for his support. Should your holiness entertain a different view, it would be a source of much affliction to us, while at the same time we are convinced that it will be much more detrimental than otherwise to the interest of religion; for, as it has pleased your holiness to appoint one of our body to administer confirmation, consecrate altar-stones, bless the holy oils, and grant dispensations in the prohibited degrees, this appointment is equally advantageous for the good of religion.⁶¹

Carroll's sentiments on the *Memorial* are well expressed in a letter to Father Thorpe, dated February 17, 1785, copied from the original brouillon in the Baltimore Archives, which follows in its chronological place in this series of documents on the question.

(b) Father Charles Plowden's letter of July 3, 1784, which Carroll answered on September 18, 1784. (He mentions having received the news already from Father Thomas Talbot, the Procurator of the dissolved English Jesuit Province). "I do assure you, dear Charles," he wrote, "that nothing personal to myself, excepting the dissolution of the Society, ever gave me so much concern. And, if a meeting of our gentlemen to be held on the 9th of October agree in thinking that I can decline the intended office without grievous inconvenience, I shall certainly do so."⁶²

(c) The letter of Barbé de Marbois, French Chargé d'Affaires, at New York, dated October 27, 1784, reached Carroll on November 8. "I congratulate myself," Marbois says, "in being one of the first to assure you that this choice will give general satisfaction." Accompanying the letter was the dispatch from Cardinal Antonelli to "Mr. John Carroll, Superior of the Missions in the thirteen United States of North America," authorizing him to publish the Jubilee of 1775-1776, which was specially extended to the

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 797-798.

⁶² HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Documents, Vol. ii, pp. 632-633.

United States. The proclamation of this Jubilee was the first official act of the new Superior.

(d) The official documents of his election to the Superiorship sent by Cardinal Antonelli on June 9, reached him on November 26, 1784. Cardinal Antonelli's letter, as given above, emphasized the one point in the official decree of appointment which gave Father Carroll most concern, namely, the nature and the extent of his dependence on Propaganda.

Shea has summed up the effect of this letter in the following paragraph:

The action of the Holy See had given the Catholics in the United States a separate organization; but among priests and people who had just emerged from the oppressed condition so long maintained by the penal laws, the temporary tenure of the Prefect, his absolute dependence on the Propaganda, and the extremely limited powers given him, were the source of much uneasiness.⁶³

No one felt more uneasy over the embarrassing situation caused by his appointment than Father Carroll himself. We have seen how decided his views were from the beginning on the question of having the American Church under what he and others called "Foreign domination." The appointment was not at all to his liking. "He had a decided repugnance to accept any position, and especially one merely at their pleasure, from the Congregation de Propaganda Fide; to accept it hampered by restrictions and little power for good was a step from which he shrank." The action taken by the Chapter in October, 1784, left him free to decline the appointment. Our only means of following his deliberations on the question of acceptance is in his correspondence with his fellow priests, as a result of a Circular he issued about this time to the clergy announcing his appointment and asking for their guidance in the matter. This circular contained the statement:

Nothing but the present extreme necessity of some spiritual powers here, could induce me to act under a commission, which may produce, if long continued, and it should become public, the most dangerous jealousy.⁶⁴

Some of this correspondence has survived, and in a special manner, the letters of his two friends of Philadelphia, Fathers Molyneux and Farmer, are important, for they undoubtedly had a great share in his decision. Father Molyneux had been in correspondence with Carroll all through the year 1784, owing to the Wharton-Carroll controversy, and had been instrumental in securing important data from the library of James Logan for Carroll's reply to the apostate. Shortly after Father Thorpe's letter had become known to the clergy, Father Molyneux wrote to Carroll, September 18, 1784, telling him of the great joy he experienced in learning that the Holy See had chosen Carroll for the post. "It is our humble opinion," he wrote, "that you should not hesitate one moment in giving your consent. *In negotio tanti momenti digitus Dei, haud dubium est.* We shall henceforth esteem it our duty daily to remember you *ad altare*. May God grant us all grace to be ever thankful, and by our lives and conversation show that we are not undeserving." It has

⁶³ *Op. cit.*, Vol. ii, p. 245-264.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 251, note.

been my uniform opinion that no one was so fit for the sacred character."⁶⁶ This sentiment he reiterates in letters dated from Philadelphia, November 18, November 25, and December 7, 1784. "A refusal on your part," he writes, "or an objection on that of any of our gentlemen [the ex-Jesuits] might prove fatal to their fortune and existence in this country, and perhaps so to the cause of religion." Father Farmer to whom he showed his letters urged Carroll to reply at once to Propaganda, accepting the post.

In the Baltimore Archives (Case 9A-F1) there is the rough sketch of a circular, dated January 12, 1785, which Carroll issued regarding the Jubilee of 1775-1776. "The commencement of this grant is to date from November 28, 1784, and it is to be in force till November 28, 1785. A commission was sent me at the same time to publish it in all the countries subject to these states." At the end of this letter is the announcement that, until "I have better opportunity of conversing with the several gentlemen, to fix a general and equitable rule for keeping lent for all the different Congregations, I request each of you to make such regulations (for this year) for those under your charge, as you shall in prudence think proper." This is the language of a Superior. Father Carroll had evidently concluded to accept the Prefectship-Apostolic by this time, but before doing so he decided to place the whole affair with its proper light before the authorities at Rome. A long letter, written on February 14, 1785, to his friend Father Thorpe at Rome, is a summary of the ecclesiastical situation created by his appointment. The rough draft of the *Letter*, with many erasures and corrections, is in the *Baltimore Archives* (Case 9A-F1.) It is here printed for the first time in full; Shea has only used excerpts from it:

Maryland, near Georgetown, Feb. 17, 1785

The official information of the advices sent by you June 9th, 1784, was only received Nov. 26th. I did myself the honour of writing to you on the subject, immediately after receiving your letter, which was about the 20th of August, and of thanking you most cordially for your active and successful endeavours to render service to this country. I say successful, not because your partiality, as I presume, joined to that of my old and chearful friend Dr. Franklin suggested me to the consideration of his Holiness; but because you have obtained some form of spiritual government to be adopted for us. It is not indeed quite such as we wish; and it cannot continue long in its present form. You well know, that in our free and jealous government, where Catholics are admitted into all public councils equally with the professors of any other Religion, it will never be suffered that their Ecclesiastical Superior (be he a Bishop or Prefect-Apostolic), receive his appointment from a foreign State, and only hold it at the discretion of a foreign tribunal or congregation. If even the present temper, or inattention of our Executive, and legislative bodies were to overlook it for this and perhaps a few more instances, still ought we not to acquiesce and rest quiet in actual enjoyment; for the consequence, sooner or later, would certainly be, that some malicious or jealous-minded person would raise a spirit against us, and under pretence of rescuing the State from foreign influence, and dependence, strip us per-

⁶⁶ USCM, Vol. iii, p. 376-379.

haps of our common civil rights. For these reasons, every thinking man amongst us is convinced, that we neither must request or admit any other foreign interference than such, as being essential to our religion, is implied in the acknowledgment of the Bishop of Rome, by divine appointment, head of the universal Church; and the See of St. Peter being the center of ecclesiastical unity.

I am well aware that these suggestions will sound ungrateful at Rome, and that the mention of them from us will be perhaps imputed by some of the officers of the propaganda to a remaining spirit of Jesuitism; but I own to you, that tho' I wish to treat with them upon terms of sincere unanimity and cordial concurrence in all matters tending to the service of Religion, yet I do not feel myself disposed to sacrifice to the fear of giving offence the permanent interests of Religion. I mean candidly and respectfully to state our present situation; the spirit of our people; and the sentiments of the R. Catholics, the principal of whom are ready and desirous to transmit to Rome their opinion on the probable consequences of such a spiritual government, as is laid down in my dispatches from yr city. Whether I shall transmit their opinion under their own signature, I am yet uncertain; I would wish to avoid giving the Congregation, or any other person the smallest reason to suspect a cabal to defeat their measures; and if plain and honest representation will not succeed with them, I should fear the effects of intemperate obstinacy.

That you may judge of these matters yourself, I must inform you, that my dispatches contained, 1st decree of the Congn. of the Propgda., appointing me Superior of the Missions in the Thirteen U. States, *ad suum beneplacitum . . . cum auctora ea exercendi, quae ad earundem Missionum regimen pertinent, ad proscriptum decretorum sacrae Congnis. et facultatum eidem [mihi] concessarum et, non alias nec alio modo.* 2-ly An order from his Holiness, empowering me to administer Confirmation. 3-ly A letter from Cardl. Antonelli, advising that His Holiness has extended to these States the Jubilee of 1776. 4-ly Another letter from him and one likewise from the Nuncio at Paris, desiring me to send two youths to be educated in the College of the Propgda. 5-ly In the same letter Cardl. Antonelli wishes to know the number of our Clergy, and the amount of their incomes: for tho' the Congregation means not to meddle in temporalibus, yet conceiving and believing there are Church possessions here, it is proper for them to know how many Clergymen can be maintained from them. 6-ly He further informs that his Holiness means hereafter to appoint a Bishop Vicar-apostolic; but neither insinuates when or whom. 7-ly In the faculties sent me, which with respect to matrimonial dispensations, are too much restricted, for our exigencies. I am particularly charged to grant no powers or faculties to any who may come into this country, but those quos sacra Congregao. destinaverit et approbaverit. Thus you see the outlines of our future Ecclesiastical government, as it is planned at Rome.

Our objections to it are—1st We conceive our situation no longer as that of missionaries; and the Ecclesiastical constitution here no longer as that of a mission. By acquiring civil and religious rights in common with other Christians, we are become a national Catholic Clergy; Colleges are now erecting for giving general and liberal education; these Colleges are open, both to masters and scholars of every religious denomination; and as we have every reason to believe, that amongst the youth trained in these different

Colleges, there will be frequently some inclined to the Ecclesiastical State we Catholics propose instituting a Seminary to form them to the virtues of their future state, and to instruct them in Divinity. Thus we shall in a few years, with the blessing of providence, be able to supply this country with labourers in the Lord's vineyard, and keep up a succession, if we are indulged in a Bishop. We are not in immediate want of one, and it will be more agreeable to many of my Brethren not to have any yet appointed; but whenever the time for it comes, we conceive that it will be more advantageous to Religion and less liable to give offence that he be an ordinary Bishop, and not a Vicar-Apostolic, and be chosen and presented to his Holiness by the American Cath. Clergy. 2-ly For two reasons we think it improper to be subject in our Ecclesiastical government to the Propaganda: the first is, that not being missionaries, we conceive ourselves, not a proper object of their institutions; and the second is, that tho' our free and tolerant forms of Government (in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania) admit us to equal civil rights with other Christians, yet the leading men in our respective States often express a jealousy of any foreign jurisdiction; and surely will be more offended without submitting to it in matters not essential to our faith. I hope they will never object to our depending on the Pope in things purely spiritual; but I am sure there are men, at least in this State, who would blow up a flame of animosity against us, if they suspected that we were to be so much under the government of any Congn. at Rome, as to receive our Superior from it, commissioned only during their good will; and that this Superior was restricted from employing any Clergyman here, but such as that Congregation should direct. I dread so much the consequences of its being known that this last direction was ever given, that I have not thought it proper to mention it to several of my Brethren.

With respect to sending two youths, I shall inform Propaganda that it would surely be very acceptable to have children educated gratis in so religious a seminary; and very acceptable to us all to have a succession of ministers of the altar thus provided for: but, as I suppose, they will not receive any into their College, but such as shall afterwards be subject to their government; and it being yet uncertain what effect my representations may produce, I shall delay that measure till further information.

I shall in the meantime request permission to give faculties to other Clergymen, than those sent by the Propgda., of whose virtue and talents I shall have sufficient documents. For want of this power, the Catholics in the Jerseys, N. Y., the great Western Country, bordering on the lakes, and the Ohio, Wabash, and Mississippi (to say nothing of many in the N. England States and Carolinas) are entirely destitute of spiritual succours. The Catholics in some of these Settlements, have been at the expence of paying the passage of some Irish Franciscans, providing for their subsistence, and in erecting places of worship. These men have brought good testimonials; but I am precluded from giving them any spiritual powers.

I should deem it a singular happiness to have an opportunity of conferring with a person of your experience of the air of Rome, before these representations are given in. But our distance is so great, that I must act according to the best of my own and Brethren's judgment, and commit all I can to your prudent management. At a meeting of some of us last autumn, it was ordered that £. St. 20-0-0 should be remitted to you as a feeble acknowledgement of our sense of your services and to defray your expence of attendance, etc.

Mr. Ashton, who is chosen to be our Manager general, either has or soon will transmit the necessary orders for it. Tho', since my late appointment, I do not intermeddle in our temporal concerns, yet I shall not fail to suggest the propriety of fixing on you, as our agent, a permanent salary: it will be proportioned, not to your zeal and services, but to our poor ability. At the same meeting, but after I had left it thro' indisposition, a direction was given to Messrs. Diderick, Mosely, and Matthews to write you a letter (I believe likewise a Memorial to the Pope) against the appointment of a Bishop. I hear that this has displeased many of those absent from the meeting, and that it is not certain, whether the measure is to be carried into execution. Mr. Diderick has shown me a copy of his intended letter to you, of his Memorial, and of a letter to Cardl. Borromeo. He has no other introduction to write to this worthy Cardinal than the information communicated to me by our common friend Plowden, of his great worth and friendly disposition to you. I made objections to some parts of his letters; and I cannot tell as I mentioned before whether they will be sent. It is [a] matter of surprise to me that he was nominated to the commission of Three; he is truly a zealous, painstaking Clergyman; but not sufficiently prudent, and conversant in the world, or capable of conducting such a business with the circumspection necessary to be used by us towards our own Government, and the Congn. of the Propaganda.

My long letter must have tired you. But it has been so earnestly recommended to me to give you very minute intelligence, that I have ventured to trespass on your patience. I have two things more to request: 1st. that you would please to present us all, and myself in particular, to Cardl. Borromeo, as penetrated with a lively sense of his virtue, and earnestly suing for his good offices to the service of Religion in this Country, wherever they can be usefully employed. 2-ly that you would let Mr. Thayer know (for I hear from Plowden that he is at Paris, and corresponds with you) that I shall be happy in being favoured with an epistolary intercourse with him: and in confidence of your introduction, I shall probably write to him before I have your answer.

The little leisure I have lately had, has been taken up in writing and publishing an answer to Wharton's pamphlet, which was held up as unanswerable by our adversaries, whom the elegance of his language, and their ignorance in Religious controversy equally contributed to deceive. I have desired Mr. Talbot to transmit you a copy by the first opportunity. I doubt, I have not made my court to a certain party at Rome by my note on the destruction of the Society. Be pleased to charge with us all postage and other expences on our acct. A credit shall be placed in England for discharging them.

With perfect esteem,

I have the honour to be, Dr Sir,

etc. etc.

Mr. Thorpe.

The ease with which the French intrigue had progressed became clearer to Father Carroll through his correspondence with Father Plowden. On September 21, 1784, Father Plowden wrote a complete exposé of the whole project, and his letter contained the following important message:

Although I know you to be incapable of mistaking the right line of conduct upon this occasion, yet, I think it the part of a friend to send you whatever information I can obtain. My meaning is not to advise or instruct you, but only to enlarge your prospect. I must repeat that there are certainly some oblique views, most probably directed to the property of the American mission, and to the obtaining superiority over the missionaries. The note delivered to the nuncio proves their wishes to exclude every Jesuit from trust or honor, and equally betrays the policy of the French ministry ("the nation most friendly to congress"), who, by bringing forward a Frenchman, or perhaps an Irish-Frenchman, would use religion as an instrument to increase their own influence in America. Our friend Thorpe's memorial, delivered to the Pope, along with your petition, by Cardinal Borromeo, convinced the propaganda that the introduction of an alien would overthrow the mission. I wish you may quickly be turned into an ordinary from a bishop in partibus, and am persuaded the pope could not refuse you the powers, &c., if your election by your own clergy, were abetted by your provincial assembly. We wish you to be as free as the bishop of Quebec, or the new archbishop of Mohilow. I wish to know in what light the leading men in the states consider your appointment. If they are disposed to tolerate it, surely they would be more willing to admit a bishop only dependent on the holy see, than one who must be subject to the prefect and secretary of a congregation. If they can be brought to relish such a prelate, it is but one step more: you want not talents or spirit to take it, and all difficulties are at once removed. The business has been hitherto treated at Paris, with uncommon secrecy by the nuncio,

Mr. Thayer, who lives in Navarre college, wrote lately thus, to our friend Thorpe:

"With respect to the views of Rome upon America, all that I can tell you is that there is a treaty on foot to establish a vicar-apostolic for the thirteen states, which treaty, I suppose, is near conclusion. I know not what the Americans will think of this plan, whether they would fear a too great dependence on Rome. This I know, that any English priests whom I have the honor to know here, think that apostolic vicars are the ruin of Catholicity in England, and that bishops properly established, would be the fit instruments of building a solid edifice, both there and in America." Make your own comments, my dear friend, on this extract, substitute a less violent word to ruin, and we shall easily agree with the writer. He is noticed by the archbishop of Paris and other dignified clergymen of the greatest merit, and much commended by the superior of Navarre college, in whose house he lives gratis. He appears to be sincere, and zealous for the promotion of religion in America, and we hope he will not be misled, &c.

If your friends here were better informed of your concerns, they might occasionally yield you service. Upon the first rumor that a vicar-apostolic was to be appointed, I prevailed upon Mr. Hoskins to write to Dr. Franklin to expose to him the degree of respect and consideration due to the missionaries now in America, and to desire that no proposals might be admitted without the participation and consent of you in particular, of the other missioners, and the principal Catholic gentry in the country. At Mr. Thorpe's desire, the same has been written to him by Messrs. N. Sewell and Mattingly, with other information relative to the origin and actual state of the American missions. Mr. Thorpe is all alive in your service; and wishes that his endeavors

may be useful to the common cause, and approved by you. The Romans have got scent of your promotion, and according to their custom have strangely distorted the whole business, even your name. They bring in the French king to figure in it, and talk of congress and your provincial assemblies as if they were so many conseils souverains in France.⁶⁶

This letter probably reached Father Carroll about the time of the *Memorial* of December, 1784. To this situation abroad was added the danger of dissension at home. The "famous triumvirate," as Father Molyneux called the anti-episcopal Committee, was apparently not in favor of Carroll. No doubt other factors of which we are nowadays unaware entered into his final decision to accept the Prefectship. "Since the prefecture," writes O'Gorman, "was expected to pave the way to some more satisfactory and permanent arrangement, and since, on the other hand, his refusal might result in the imposition of a foreigner as Prefect on the Catholics in America, Carroll yielded to the arguments of his fellow-priests and decided to take up the onerous office."⁶⁷

Father Carroll's acceptance of the Prefectship is contained in his *Letter* to Cardinal Antonelli, dated February 27, 1785. The rough draft of this *Letter* is in the *Baltimore Archives* (Case 9A-F1); an imperfect copy is among the *Shea Transcripts* at Georgetown University. The original, given here for the first time, has been photostated at Rome (*Propaganda Archives, America Centrale*, vol. 2, fols. 306-311). It is left untranslated, since the main paragraphs have been used by Shea.

Eminentissime Domine

Litterae, quas ad me destinare dignata est Em^a Vestra, diebus 9^a et 16^a anni praeteriti, in manus meas non pervenerunt ante diem 26 Novembris. Varia autem documenta litteras comitabantur. 1^o Decretum Sacrae Congregationis de Propagandâ fide quâ me Superiorem missionum in tredecim Confoederatae Americae provinciis ad suum beneplacitum declaravit. 2^o Benignissima suae Sanctitatis concessio et extensio universalis Jubilaei ad omnes Fideles in tredecim Confoederatae Americae provinciis. 3^o Altera ejusdem concessio quâ mihi facultas tribuitur adminstrandî Sacramentum Confirmationis ad normam Instructionis, quam una recepi. 4^o demum, facultates a S^{smo} D.N. mihi concessae et Sociis in hâc Domini vineâ laborantibus communicabiles.

Quod litteris, quibus haec ad me transmisisti documenta, Eminentissime Cardinalis, tantam erga me benevolentiam, tantum rei Catholicae in remotis hisce orbis partibus adjuvandae studium significaveris, gratias habeo et ago maximas, cujus quidem grati animi sensus certiorum te prius fecissem, nisi longa imprimis a domo absentia, postea autem intempestiva navigantibus glacies scribendi occasionem denegasset. Deinde rogo te, ac humillime precor, ut Sanctitatis suae pedibus me sistere, ac devotissimum erga Sedem Apostolicam obsequium testificari velis; gratiasque referre, quod tam gravi munere me indignum non existimaverit.

Hi sunt animi sensus, quibus erga B^{num} Patrem, tequea deo, Cardinalis

⁶⁶ USCM, Vol. iii, pp. 376-377.

⁶⁷ *History of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States*, p. 267. New York, 1907.

Eminentissime, affectus fui, ubi propensam utriusque in me benevolentiam, et sollicitam pro Sanctâ nostrâ Religione in his regionibus providentiam intellexerem. Fuere tamen aliasque, quae tum initio, tum deinceps cogitanti mihi, magnum timorem, magnam etiam moestitiam incutiebant. Videbam imprimis illud mihi munus committi, cui subeundo, ut sincere et ex intimo sensu profiteor, imparem me omnino esse sentio, nec illis animi aut corporis viribus praeditum, quibus instructum esse oportet, quicumque se ad illud fideliter administrandum acinxerit. Deinde ut Emin^{ae} T^{ae} votis obsequeretur accuratam de rebus nostris relationem desiderantis, aliqua mihi commemoranda esse non ignorabam, quae minus grata fortasse essent futura, imo quae suspicionem commovere possent minus propensae in Sedem Apostolicam observantiae. Haec tamen omnia veritati postponam, et sincere rerum nostrarum expositioni. Scio enim, Em. Card.^{lis}, nihil tuto aut efficaciter circa nos agi posse, nisi quae sit nostra conditio, planè intelligatur.

Imprimis igitur, ex tredecim provinciis, quae olim Regi Magnae Britanniae parebant, duae tantum fuere, Pensylvania et Marilandia, in quibus permissum erat Catholicis tuto degere: In his etiam lege cautum erat, ne officio civili, militari, aut alio quovis frui possent. Excusso autem jugo Brittanico, novisque conditis legibus, in omnibus provinciis, Catholici sine molestiâ vivere et sacra peragere possunt. In plerisque tamen locis ad Reipublicae munera capessenda non admittuntur, nisi qui omnem jurisdictionem exteram, sive civilem, sive ecclesiasticam abrenuntiaverint. Ita fit, ut in plerisque his provinciis, seu Statibus, ut nunc vocant, nostri homines maneant a Republicâ exclusi: In quatuor tantum, nempe in Pensylvaniâ, Delawariâ, Marilandîâ, et Virginiâ, eodem ac coeteri cives jure utuntur. Haec autem beneficia, sive tolerantiae, sive juris communis, quamdiu simus habituri, non ausim pronunciare. Timent e nostris multi, in Marilandîâ praecipue, A catholicis in animo esse, ut omnino a gerendis muneribus excludamur: ego autem cui satis semper fuit mala non animo praevenire, sed, ubi advenierint, utrumque tolerare, spe foveo tantam nobis injuriam haud esse inferendam: imo vero confido tam firma Religionis fundamenta in his Americanis Statibus jaci posse, ut florentissima Ecclesiae portio, cum magno Sedis Apostolicae solatio, hic aliquando sit futura. Hoc autem loco illa mihi commemoranda sunt, de quibus dixi superius scitu necessaria, ut recte res nostrae Ecclesiasticae possint administrari.

Viguit autem in his regionibus praecipue secta Anglecana; rerum sacrarum apud illos ministri pendebant omnes a Pseudo-Episcopo Londinensi: ad illum transfretabant, quotquot ordinari secundum sectae suae rationem cupiebant. Peracto autem bello, obtineri non potuit a sectae illius ministris, quamvis essent omnium frequentissimi, ut ab Episcopo Anglo, imo ab extero quovis penderent. Concessum est illis potius, ut Episcopos sibi constituerent et eligerent, quod jam ab ipsis factum est, quamvis nullum adhuc suo ritu consecratum habeant: Religionis suae administrandae sibi formam praescripserunt; religionem suam dici et haberi *nationalem* cupiunt, eo quod jam nullum alibi superiorem admittant: denique ita machinantur ut ab illis timor ille incutatur, quo nostrorum nonnullus percuti dicebam.

Eminentissimus Cardinalis persuasum sibi habeat nobis gravissima omnia tolerabiliora fore, quam divinam illam Sedis Apostolicae auctoritatem abrenunciare: nec tantum Sacerdotes, qui hic sumus, sed etiam populum Catholicum in fide ita videri stabilem, ut nunquam a debita Summo Pontifici obedientiâ sit

dimovendus. Idem tamen ille populus aliquam a B^{mo} Patre gratiam sibi concedi, imo deberi existimat, necessariam sane sive ad juris communis quo nunc utitur conservationem, sive ad propulsandum periculum, quod timetur. Ex iis quae dixi, et ex rerum publicarum, quae hic sunt, constitutione, Emin^{ae} Tuae ignotum esse non potest, quam invidiosa illis sit omnis externa jurisdictio. Hoc igitur a Catholicis desideratur, ut nulla detur ansa Religionis nostrae adversariis nos criminandi, quasi plus aequo a regimine externo pendeamus; et ut aliqua ratio ineatur quâ in posterum Superior Ecclesiasticus huic regioni destinari possit, ita ut Spiritualis S^{ae} Sedis jurisdictio omnino servetur; et si mul tollatur omnis occasio nobis obijciendi, quasi aliquid admittamus patriae Independentiae inimicum. Hoc ex praecipuis Catholicis multi, communi scripto, Sanctitati suae significare cogitabant, ac ii maxime, qui vel in generali Americae Concilio (Congressum vocant) sedem obtinuerunt, vel in Pensylvaniâ ac Marilandâ conciliis legislativis cum auctoritate intersunt; a quibus tamen obtinui, ut in praesens ejusmodi scriptum differatur. Quid hâc in re statui possit, Beatissimus Pater plenius forsân intelliget, ubi animum advertet ad sextum articulum *unionis perpetuae* inter Status foederatae Americae; quo sancitur, *nemini licitum fore, qui munere quovis fungatur sub Unitis Statibus, donum aliquod, officium aut titulum cujusvis generis accipere a Rege aliquo, Principe aut domino extero.* Quae prohibitio, etsi ad illos tantum pertinere videatur, qui ad munera Reipublicae destinantur, ab adversariis tamen nostris etiam ad officia Ecclesiastica fortasse detorquebitur. Cupimus igitur, Em^{ae} Cardinalis, omni modo providere, ut fidei integritas, et debita erga Sedem Apostolicam observantia, et unio semper vigeat: at simul ut Catholicis Americanis pro Ecclesiastico regimine concedatur, quidquid salvâ Religione concedi potest. Ita minui sectariorum invidiam plenam suspicionis, ita res nostras stabiliri posse confidimus.

Significasti, Em^e Card^{lis}, Sanctitatis suae mentem esse et consilium, ut Vicarium Apostolicum Episcopali characterem et titulo insignitum pro his provinciis decernat. Ut paterna haec pro nobis sollicitudo magnâ nos laetitia affectit, ita etiam aliquem initio incussit timorem. Sciebamus enim A Catholicis Americanis olim persuaderi nunquam potuisse, ut vel suae sectae Episcopum admitterent, cum id tentaretur, dum Angliae Regi hae provinciae subessent: unde etiam timor nascebatur, ne nobis quidem id permissum iri. At jam, ab aliquot mensibus, conventionem factâ. Ministrorum Protestantium Ecclesiae Anglicanae, seu Episcopalis, ut nunc vocant, decreverunt se, quod ex legum auctoritate pleno suae Religionis exercitio gaudeant, eo ipso jus habere ad tales rerum Sacrarum Ministros sibi constituendos, quales sectae suae ratio et disciplina exigit, Episcopos scilicet, Presbyteros et Diaconos; cui illorum decreto non repugnaverunt, qui condendis legibus apud nos sunt designati. Cum igitur nobis eadem pro Religionis exercitio libertas concedatur, pro quoque idem, quantum ad leges nostras municipales spectat, competere necesse est.

Re autem se habente, judicabit Beatissimus Pater, tuque adeo, Em^e Card^{lis}, animo perpendes, an tempus constituendo Episcopo opportunum nunc sit, qualis is esse debeat, et quomodo designandus: de quibus omnibus, non tamquam iudicium meum interpositurus, sed pleniorum relationem facturum aliqua commemorabo. Imprimis de opportunitate temporis observari potest, nullam jam animorum fore commotionem, si Episcopus designetur, quod A Catholicis Protestantes sibi aliquem constituere cogitent: deinde ut aliquam

suae sectae apud vulgus existimationem ex Episcopali dignitate conciliare sperant, ita etiam non solum similem nobis, sed etiam ingentia commoda obventura confidimus, cum hanc Ecclesiam eo modo administrari contigerit, quo Christus Dominus instituit. Ex altera tamen parte occurrit, quod cum jam Smus Pater aliter Sacramento Confirmationis conferendo providere dignatus sit, non prius Episcopum nobis constituere necessitas postulet, quam idonei aliqui reperiantur ad Sacros Ordines suscipiendos, quod paucis annis futurum speramus, ut intelliget Eminensus. Cardinalis ex iis, quae separatim relatione distinctâ scribere cogito. Quod tempus ubi advenerit, commodius fortasse pro decenti Episcopi sustentatione providere, quam nunc pro rerumstrarum tenuitate poterimus.

Deinde, si Episcopum nobis assignare Sanctitati suae visum fuerit, praestabitne Vicarium Apostolicum, an Ordinarium cum propria Sede constituere? Quis rei Catholicae incremento, quis amovendae Catholicorum invidiae, terrorique illi de exterâ jurisdictione magis inseviat? quem terrorem auctum iri certissime scio, si Superiore Ecclesiasticum ita designari noverint, ut ad arbitrium Sacrae Congregationis de propagandâ fide, aut cujusvis alterius tribunalis externi ab officio possit dimoveri: nec fas illi sit Sacerdotem quemvis ad sacras functiones admittere, quem illa Congregatio non approbaverit, et ad nos destinaverit.

De modo autem Episcopum designandi nihil aliud nunc dicam, quam implorare nos, pro Sedis Apostolicae iudicio dirigendo divinam sapientiam et misericordiam; ut, si minime concedendum videatur Sacerdotibus in hac Domini vineâ tot annos laborantibus illum suae Sanctitati proponere, quem ipsi magis idoneum existimaverint, conveniatur tamen de aliquâ Episcopum nominandi viâ, quâ Nostratum, tam Catholicorum, quam Sectariorum offensio possit averti.

De Duobus juvenibus ad Urbanum Collegium mittendis nihil agere licuit, donec plenius de Emæ tuae mente intellexero. Si itineris impensis impares fuerint, video quidem a Sacra Congregatione de viatico provium iri: non tamen habeo compertum, cui demandatum sit illas impensas subministrari. Navium enim magistri in navem vectores recipere non solent, nisi naulum ante navigationem solvatur, aut certo sciant, a quo repetendum sit. Deinde, ut quae dixi de Episcopo vel Superiore designando, aliquam forte mutationem suggerent circa modum res nostras Ecclesiasticas administrandi, ita quoque consilium de educandis in isto Collegio Juvenibus poterit mutari, quod tamen minime futurum confidimus. Postremo, convenerit, ut Juvenum parentes doceantur, an Juramentum aliquod et cujusmodi ab eorum filiis exigendum sit, antequam in patriam remittantur: omnis enim cautela adhibenda est, ut, quantum fieri potest, videantur Catholici, tam populus quam ministri, in rebus tantum omnino necessariis ab exterâ potestate pendere.

Interim, dum responsum exspecto, dabo operam, ut Juvenes duo summâ curâ seligantur, quales tuae litterae, Emin: Cardl^{is}, exigunt: spero insuper me effecturum, ut itineris impensae, saltem hinc usque in Galliam a parentibus solvantur: sin minus id obtinuero, omnem in illis impensis moderationem adhiberi curabo. Intelligo autem pro unoquoque juvene navigationis et alios necessarios sumptus, donec portum attigerit, summam septuaginta vel octoginta aureorum circiter confecturos.

Reliqua, de quibus instrui voluisti, Emæ Cardl^{is}, pro religiosâ tuâ erga nos sollicitudine, opportunius separato scripto extra formam litterarum

exhiberi posse existimavi; illud tamen hic iterum atque iterum obsecro, ut eam in facultatibus mihi concessis restrictionem tolli omni modo cures, quâ aliorum Sacerdotum operâ uti prohibeor, praeter illos quos sacra Congregatio destinaverit et approbaverit. Id enim nisi concedatur, brevi spatio magna Catholicorum pars amnino Sacramentorum expers erit, et Religionis ministeriis destituta. Unica enim, quae nobis superest spes supplementi cujusdam cito recipiendi pro Sociis extinctis, aut jam ad extremum senium vergentibus, posita est in illis Sacerdotibus, qui hic nati, anti bellum exortum in Europam educationis causâ profecti sunt, ibique sacros Ordines susceperunt. Audio horum aliquos in patriam reditum cogitare: qui quibus tamen, si advenerint, in otio erit manendum, utcumque moribus et doctrinâ comparatis ad hanc Domini vineam excolendam. Itaque, omni quidem reverentiâ, sed simul summâ fiduciâ, et ex plenâ persuasione id è re Religionis fore, rogo, Emin: Cardinalis, ut tuum apud Sanctitatem suam studium interponas, illique significes, Superiori in his Foederatae Americae Statibus omnino necesse est, ut quos Sacerdotes dignos judicaverit, hos in laborum Societatem possit ascire.

Haec habui, Em^e Card.^{lis}, quae liberè fideliterq; scriberem de rebus ad Religionem spectantibus, quibus veluti supplementum et ad tua quaesita responsum accedent, quae altero scripto commemorata reperies. Mihi jam sit permissum hanc gregis Dominici portionem, pastoresq; qui in illo sunt, meo ipsum singulari tuae pietati, paternaeq; benevolentiae commendare; precariq; ut oculos conjicias in immensas illas regiones, quae foederatae Americae finibus continentur: in diesque magis ac magis immigrantium accessionibus, et ex naturali foecunditate, incolentium numero augentur. Ubique liberè praedicari poterit vera fides, nec quidquam ob stare videtur, quo minus magni ex hâc libertate fructus decerpantur, praeter operariorum defectum, mediaque illis providendi. Ad te igitur, qui singulari curâ, studio et auctoritate Religionis propagationi invigilas, recurrimus, ut quae ad hunc finem meditamus, pro tuâ sapientiâ adjuvare velis, hancque regionem veluti tuae providentiae et fidei commissam intueri. Quod ad me spectat, ego summâ fiduciâ, Eminentissime Cardinalis, in hujus Ecclesiae negotiis tua consilia, tuam auctoritatem, pietatem tuam implorabo, precaborque Deum omnipotentem, ut pro animarum salute, divinaeque fidei extensione te salvum et incolumen diù esse velit. Ita vovet

Eminentissime Cardinalis

Eminae Tuae

Servus Obsequentissimus

Ex Marilandiâ, die 27^a

Februarii, 1785.

Eminentissimo Cardli Antonello.

JOANNES CARROLL.

In several of the official letters from Propaganda a request was made for certain definite information regarding the state of the Church in the new Republic. This information was asked, as we have seen, through the Nuncio at Paris, on May 12, 1784, in a letter addressed by Cardinal Antonelli to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, French Minister Plenipotentiary, at New York. Cardinal Antonelli's letter to Father Carroll, June 9, 1784, contained the same request. This information Father Carroll obtained by correspondence with his fellow-priests between November, 1784, and March 1, 1785. He embodied this information in his *Relation of the State of Religion in the United*

States. The original is here printed for the first time, from a photostat copy taken in the *Propaganda Archives, America Centrale*, vol. 2, fols. 312-314. An imperfect copy is among the *Shea Transcripts*. The rough draft is in Case 9A-F1, of the *Baltimore Archives*. As the first *Relation* of its kind to be sent to Rome from the United States, it is among the most treasured first-hand sources for the history of the Church in our country:

Relatio pro Emo Cardinali Antonello de statu Religionis in Unitis Foederatae Americae provinciis.

1° De numero Catholicorum in Foederatae Americae Provinciis.

Sunt in *Marilandâ* circiter 15,800. Ex his sunt novem mille homines liberi aetatis adultae, aut supra annum duodecimum; pueri minoris aetatis fere ter mille, totidemq; omnis aetatis servi (Nigros vocant a colore) ex Africa oriundi. In *Pensilvaniâ* sunt ad minimum *septem mille*, inter quos paucissimi Africani, vivuntq; Catholici collecti magis ac sibi invicem contigui. In *Virginia* sunt non *amplius ducenti*, quibus quater aut quinques per annum adest Sacerdos: Dicuntur plurimi alii, tam in illâ, quam in coeteris provinciis sparsim vivere, anni Religionis ministerio destituti. In provinciâ *Novum Eboracum* dictâ, audio *esse mille quingentos ad minimum*, qui nuper communibus sumptibus ex Hiberniâ accersiverunt virum Religiosum Ordinis Si. Francisci; diciturq; optimis de moribus et doctrinâ documentis instructus esse: advenerat paulo prius, quam litteras acceperissem, quibus facultates Sociis communicabiles ad me sunt delatae. Dubitavi aliquando, an jure possem hunc pro Sacramentorum administratione approbare. Et jam statui, appropinquante maxime festo Paschali, ipsum pro Socio habere, facultatesq; necessarias impertiri, quod meum consilium approbatum iri confido. Nihil certi dicere licet de numero Catholicorum, qui sunt in locis conterminis fluvio dicto *Mississippi*, omnique illi regioni, quae secundum illum fluvium ad Oceanum Atlanticum pertingit, et ab eodem usque ad limites Carolinae, Virginiae, et Pensilvaniae extenditur. Hic tractus continet, ut audio, multos Catholicos, olim Canadenses, qui linguâ Gallicâ utuntur, quos rerum sacrarum Ministris destitutos esse valde metuo. Transivit ad illos nuper Sacerdos quidam Germanus, sed ex Galliâ ultimo profectus, qui ex ordine Carmelitarum se esse profitetur: nullo tamen sufficiente testimonio muniebatur, missum se esse a legitimo Superiore. Quid agat, et quo statu ibi sint res Catholicae, edoctum me iri propediem expecto. Episcopi Quebecensis jurisdictio in aliquam regionis illius partem olim pertinuit: an nunc autem, cum omnes in foederatae Americae ditionem cesserint, potestatem ullam exercere velit, haud equidem scio.

2° Catholicorum conditione, pietate, abusibus, &c.

In *Marilandâ*, paucae ex praecipuis et ditioribus familiis, a primis provinciae fundamentis, fidem Catholicam a progenitoribus huc invecam adhuc profitentur: major autem pars sunt agricolae, et in *Pensilvaniâ* fere omnes, exceptis mercatoribus et opificibus, qui Philadelphiae degunt. Quod ad pietatem spectat, sunt, ut plurimum, in Religionis exercitiis et Sacramentorum frequentatione satis assidui: sed sine illo fervore, quem solet excitare continua ad sensua pietatis exhortatio: vix enim singulis mensibus, aut etiam bimestri spatio plurimae Congregationes rem divinam, et concionem sibi fieri audiunt: ita Sacerdotum inopiâ, multoq; magis, locorum intervallo, itinerisq; incommodis opprimimur: Haec de indigenis dicta sint: alia enim longe est ratio Catholicorum, qui magno numero ex variis Europae nationibus ad nos confluent.

Cum enim ex nostratibus pauci sint, qui non saepius per annum, praecipue autem tempore paschali ad Sacramenta Poenitentiae et Eucharistiae accedant; vix reperitur inter priores illos, qui officium hoc Religionis exerceat; quorum exemplum in urbibus mercatoriis maxime perniciosum fore timetur. Abusus inter Catholicos sunt illi maxime, qui ex necessariâ cum A catholicis familiaritate, et exemplis inde collectis oriuntur; liberior nempe se tractandi ratio inter juniores personas diversi sexus, quam animi, aut forte etiam corporis integritas patiatur; nimis propensum studium ad saltationes, et id genus alia; et incredibilis aviditas (in puellis praecipue) legendi fabulas amatorias, quae magno numero ad nos adveniunt. Deinde, in coeteris universim defectus diligentiae in educandis ad Religionem liberis, sed praecipue servis Africanis, totiusque illius curae ad Sacerdotes transmissio; ex quo fit, ut cum sint continuo laboribus exerciti; raroque et non nisi ad breve tempus cum Sacerdote esse possint, in fide rudes et in moribus turpissimi plerique esse soleant. Incredibile est quantum animarum postoribus molestiae et sollicitudinis facessant.

3° De numero Presbyterorum, studiis, et modo se sustendandi.

Sunt in *Marilandâ Presbyteri novemdecim*. In *Pensilvaniâ quinque*. Ex his autem duo sunt supra, tres alii proximum ad septuagesimum annum accedunt; adeoque omnino impares subeundis laboribus, sine quibus hac Domini vinea coli non potest. Inter reliquos Presbyteros, aliqui admonendum infirmâ valetudine utuntur; et unus est nuper a me approbatus, ad paucos menses tantum, ut experimentum illius faciam in extrema operariorum necessitate. Aliqua enim de ipso narrabantur, quae vehementer me deterrebant ab illius operâ adhibendâ. Ego quidem illi, quantum passum, invigilabo; et si quid acciderit gravitate sacerdotali minus dignum, facultates concessas revocabo, quantumcunque incommodum multis Catholicis inde eventurum sit. Mihi enim persuasum est Catholicam fidem minus detrimenti passuram, si nulli Sacerdotes per breve tempus fuerint, quam si, ubi ita vivimus inter alterius Religionis homines, ad sacra ministeria assumuntur. non dicam mali, Sacerdotes, sed etiam imprudentes et incauti. Reliqui omnes Sacerdotes plenam laboris vitam agunt, quod unusquisque congregationibus longe dissitis obsequium praestet, adeoque continuis, gravissimisque equitationibus, ad aegrotos praecipue, continuo fatigetur. Presbyteri sustentantur ut plurimum ex fundorum providentibus; alibi vero liberalitate Catholicorum. Nulla hic proprie sunt bona Ecclesiastica. Privatorum enim nomine possidentur ea bona, ex quibus aluntur Presbyteri; et testamentis transferuntur ad haeredes: ita faciendum suggessit dira necessitas, dum legibus Catholica Religio his arcaretur; neque adhuc inventum est huic incommodo remedium, quamvis a nobis anno elapso id tentaretur.

Ad procurandos in Religionis ministerio successores, quid faciendum sit, non satis intelligimus. Est jam Philadelphiae collegium, agiturque de duobus in *Marilandâ* extruendis, ad quo admitti poterunt Catholici aequae alii, tam Praesides, quam Professores et alumni. Fore speramus, ut hos inter aliqui vitam Ecclesiasticam velint amplecti. Cogitamus igitur de seminario instituendo, in quo valeant deinceps ad mores et doctrinam statui illi convenientes efformari.

Hâc factâ relatione, liceat nunc aliqua adjungere quo omnino neccessaria iudico ad spiritualem Catholicorum administrationem. Imprimis ex quotidiano commercio cum A catholicis, oritur perpetuum discrimen ineundi cum illis

contractus matrimonialis, ad quod periculum avertendum usus apud nos invaluerat dispensandi, quantum nobis permittebatur, inter consanguineos Catholicos. Ita non solum conservari Religionem, sed augeri ab experientiâ didicimus. Ut igitur Ssmus Pater facultates mihi benigne concessit, Socii etiam communicabiles, *dispensandi in 3° mixto cum 2°*, et inferioribus consanguinitatis et affinitatis gradibus; ita humillime tam meo, quam Sociorum nomine precor, ut saltem ad Superiorem extendere velit facultates dispensandi *in 2° simplici*, tam consanguinitatis quam affinitatis. Si autem illud generaliter concedi nequit, quod propter locorum distantium maxime optandum esset, *pro triginta ad minimum viabus* precor, ut ita dispensandi mihi detur facultas. Vehementer etiam a Sociis meis desideratur, ut possit hic *dispensari in primo gradu affinitatis* ortae ex copulâ illicitâ. Hos enim impedimentum esape subsistit inter Africanos praecipue, ante matrimonium attentatum; nec tamen nisi longum post tempus, multorumq; annorum cohabitationem Sacerdos impedimentum, fortuito plerumq; deprehendit.

Video praeterea dispensationem celebrandi missam post meridiem, *ad unam tantum horam* extendi; cum tamen aliquando confessiones expediri non possint *ante tres horas*, quod mihi certe saepe contigit a primâ aurorâ illud ministerium auspicanti; credebamq; in ejusmodi casibus legem charitatis validiorem esse, quam ut Sacramentorum expertes domum remitterentur, qui magnolabore et incommodo, viginti, triginta aut amplius mille passus venerant, et saepe in his mulieres gravidæ et partui proximæ.

Hac item in re Sanctitatis suae mentem ulterius declarari cupimus.

Si quæ alia occurrant, de quibus intellexero gratum fore, ut ad Emum Cardinalem relatio fiat, plene conscribam.

JOANNES CARROLL.

Die 1a Martii 1785.

The two problems which clouded his immediate horizon were the "cramping clauses" which practically robbed him of all power, as can be seen in his letter to Father Thorpe, of February 17, 1785, given above, and the question of a bishopric for the United States. The task before him and before the little band of workers he had in the American Vineyard was immense, he told his friend Father Plowden, in a letter dated June 29, 1785. "I receive applications from every part of the United States, north, south, and west, for clergymen, and considerable property is offered for their maintenance; but it is impossible and cruel to abandon the congregation already formed to go in quest of people who wish to be established into new ones." His inability to give faculties to new arrivals in the ministry was the most unfortunate part of his embarrassing situation. The presence of other priests in the country who carried on their ministrations without recognizing him as Superior, also added to the delicate position he held. Fortunately, on receiving Carroll's letter of February 17, 1785, Father Thorpe immediately acted by having the doubt settled at Rome; and on July 2, 1785, and again on August 31, 1785, he informed the Prefect-Apostolic that a blunder had occurred and that the "cramping clauses" against which "you had with great reason remonstrated should be struck out of the printed faculties and . . . were never meant to be where you found them, left by an oversight in the Secretary's office." As Carroll learned later, the formula of his appointment was based on that of a Prefect-Apostolic sent

from Rome with missionaries to Africa, and they quite naturally contained the clause that he was not to give faculties to any priest in his jurisdiction unless the same were sent of Propaganda. On July 23, 1785, Cardinal Antonelli wrote to Father Carroll, thanking him for the *Letter and Relation* of February–March, 1785, and approving his stand; and sending him a new formula of faculties, which allowed Carroll to receive priests into the country and to appoint them at will.⁶⁸ The second of these problems, namely, the appointment of a Superior with episcopal powers as well as jurisdiction, was not settled until November 14, 1789, when Father John Carroll was appointed Bishop of Baltimore.

There was more than the prefatory phrases of the man raised to a unique and important post in his *Letter* to Antonelli. The task before him was a delicate one; the field of his labors was, to use his own word, immense in extent and in possibilities. His jurisdiction, meagre as it was in its amplitude, was the only bond uniting the new Republic to the Holy See. He felt himself utterly incapable of bringing all the elements of Catholic life in the United States into strict conformity with canonical rule. The number of his priests was limited; many of them were old men, worn out with the fatigues and burdens of the harsh life the missionaries were forced to lead. The distances were many times greater in those days than now. Means of communication were slow and uncertain; and the very liberty which the new Republic had proclaimed to all the earth and the inhabitants thereof opened the way to adventurers ecclesiastic as it did to adventurers lay or civil. It was indeed a task arduous enough to terrify even one who did not possess John Carroll's courage and spirit of devotion. The five years of his Prefecture saw all these elements for good and for evil in the Catholic life of the Republic develop with a rapidity which soon dispelled any lingering doubts in the minds of his clergy on the necessity of a more compact canonical organization. Within twenty months the clergy had met again at Whitmarsh and petitioned the Holy See for a bishop. The administration of Church property was causing quarrels and scandals which were threatening the unity of the Church in the United States; the Revolution had not amalgamated the races that had fought side by side for liberty, and the spirit of nationalism in Church affairs was even then looming up as a potent source of antagonism. Religious toleration was not a law of the land in 1785, and did not become universally so until long after the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Dissension in the Church was apparent at the very time when the closest harmony was needed to start religious freedom on its noble way down the years of American life. The ranks of the clergy were thinning rapidly—death and disease were decimating the little band of workers, and if the Church was to live, vocations would need to be fostered, priests would have to be invited to come to the United States from other lands, and only one endowed with all the power of the episcopate could keep that strict control on ecclesiastical life without which there could be no surety of duration. These five years of Carroll's

⁶⁸ HUGHES, *op. cit.*, Documents, Vol. ii, p. 635.

Prefectship were as critical in their own way to the Church as was the uncertainty which ruled the political life of the nation between the Treaty of Paris in 1783, and Washington's election to the Presidency in 1789. It is a singular, not to say providential, coincidence that Washington and Carroll came to their offices at the same time. Washington was inaugurated April 30, 1789; Carroll was consecrated August 15, 1790, and our political organization was fully fashioned in the very year that our Church organization was perfected. It was a coincidence emblematic of the amity and concord "which have hitherto existed between the Church and the republic—amity and concord which, instead of being obliterated, are emphasized by the clear-cut distinction made in our fundamental law between the two spheres, the political and the religious."

PETER GUILDAY.